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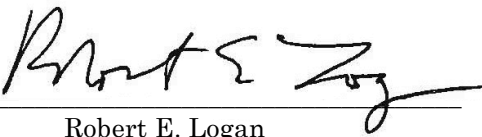
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CHRISTOPHER E. PLATT

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

has been accepted by the Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary
upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:



Robert E. Logan



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Date Received: March 19, 2016

DEVELOPING SELECTED LEADERS AT HIGHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH
SHELBYVILLE, KENTUCKY

A MINISTRY FOCUS PAPER
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

CHRISTOPHER E. PLATT
MAY 2016

ABSTRACT

Developing Selected Leaders at Highland Baptist Church

Shelbyville, Kentucky

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Doctor of Ministry

School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary

2016

The purpose of this doctoral project is to help five selected Highland Baptist Church leaders identify, develop, and lead from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths, which will help to solidify and grow the church's ministries in light of changing community dynamics. To achieve this purpose, a pilot project will be conducted with those leaders to discover and develop their gifts and strengths. Those leaders will then be encouraged to lead from their calling, gifts, and strengths in a church ministry setting. This process will occur over a period of fifteen months.

The first section of this project will focus on the ministry context. The history and demography of the community will be described. The church's history and cultural setting will be explored, and its mission, vision, beliefs, and practices will be examined. Implications drawn from both the community demography and the church setting will be analyzed.

The second section will focus on the biblical and theological concepts germane to the character and practices of a church leader. Several relevant resources designed to encourage leaders to be influential in their settings will be reviewed. Barnabas will be presented as a biblical model of leadership.

The third section will focus on the ministry strategy. Goals and implementation processes will be included. A proposed evaluation plan of the project processes to assess whether the project goals were met will also be included.

Finally, a summary of the expected outcomes and insights from the project will be included. Implications for the ministry of Highland Baptist Church along with next steps for developing additional Highland Baptist leaders using this model will be presented. Applications for other evangelical churches will also be included.

Content Reader: Robert E. Logan, PhD

Words: 278

To my wife, Phyllis; my daughters, Alyssa and Rachel; and my granddaughter, Ashlynn; who love me, bring me great joy, and celebrate that “Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the members of Highland Baptist Church for their prayers and support while I have been on this journey. I am also grateful for Crestwood Baptist Church whose people valued my goal to be a life-long learner and helped me enter the Doctor of Ministry program at Fuller Theological Seminary. Thank you to Joyce Sweeney Martin who served as editor and encourager throughout this project. I am humbled by the love and grace of these brothers and sisters in Christ as well as my extended family and community friends.

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PART ONE
MINISTRY CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

“Good Land, Good Living, Good People” is the motto of Shelby County, Kentucky.¹ Nestled in the Bluegrass region of the commonwealth, the county is known for beautiful pastoral settings complete with expansive horse farms and thousands of acres of agricultural land. Shelby County residents are salt-of-the-earth people.

Dubbed “The American Saddlebred Capital of the World,” the county is home to eighty horse farms, including many of the country’s most outstanding American Saddlebred breeding and training facilities.² Shelbyville, the largest town in the county and the county seat, is strategically located on Interstate 64 just thirty-five miles east of Louisville, the commonwealth’s largest city, and twenty miles west of Frankfort, the commonwealth’s capitol.³ Small-town charm, antique stores, destination dining, and world-class equestrian events regularly draw visitors to this central Kentucky community that was founded in 1792.⁴ Of note is the fact that Colonel Harland Sanders of Kentucky

¹ “Welcome to Shelby County: The Saddlebred Capital of the World,” Shelby County, Kentucky, accessed August 05, 2015, <http://www.shelbycountykentucky.com>.

² “Shelbyville, Simpsonville, Shelby County Tourism,” Shelby County Tourism Commission & Visitors Bureau, accessed July 27, 2015, <http://www.visitshelbyky.com/community/>.

³ “Welcome to Shelby County.”

⁴ “Shelbyville.”

Fried Chicken fame made his home in Shelbyville for the final twenty-one years of his life.⁵

While Shelbyville residents still pride themselves on the town's quaint character and the fact that many families have called the town home for generations, over the past two decades they have experienced the beginning stages of a transition from being predominately a small town to becoming a bedroom community of both Louisville and Frankfort. Since 2010, Shelbyville's population has grown from 14,049 to 14,985. During the same period, the county's population has grown from 42,074 in 2010 to 44,875. This 6.7 percent rate of change is twice the national average of 3.3 percent.⁶ The rise of new residential neighborhoods and retail centers – including the eighty-store The Outlet Shoppes of the Bluegrass in neighboring Simpsonville⁷ – during these years is visible evidence of this change and indicative of yet more change to come. White-collar families in particular have been moving into the county to take advantage of the mix of beautiful surroundings, quality homes, and proximity to both Louisville and Frankfort for work and entertainment.

When I arrived to become lead pastor of Shelbyville's Highland Baptist Church (HBC) in September 2014, I was already aware of the changing community and cultural dynamics of Shelby County and Shelbyville. (I came to HBC after having served

⁵ "Claudia Sanders Dinner House," Claudia Sanders Dinner House, accessed July 27, 2015, <http://claudiasanders.com/about/>.

⁶ US Census Bureau, "State & County QuickFacts: Shelby County, Kentucky," accessed July 11, 2015, <http://www.quickfacts.census.gov>.

⁷ "The Outlet Shoppes of the Bluegrass," Horizon Group, accessed July 27, 2015, www.theoutletshoppesofthebluegrass.com/directory-map.

fourteen years as the teaching pastor in a church in a neighboring metro Louisville county.) I, however, had only a limited understanding of the history and current state of HBC. I soon learned that the church has been a fixture on the Shelbyville landscape since 1941. Since 1968, it has been located at its current site on the eastern edge of Shelbyville's downtown area, near the crossroads of the town's main thoroughfare and one of its main state highways. Today, Interstate 64 connecting Louisville and Frankfort runs less than two miles south of the church. According to Chris Slone, branch manager of engineers of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, State Road 53 on which the church is located has the second highest volume of traffic in Shelby County and is scheduled to be expanded from two lanes to four lanes beginning in late 2016.⁸ The church is in a prime location.

When I arrived I knew that Highland Baptist Church is a Southern Baptist congregation, making it part of the predominant religious group of Shelby County. I learned that twenty-eight of the sixty-six churches in the county are affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention and that on any given Sunday, of the 5,233 attendees in Shelby County churches, 2,812 will be in a Southern Baptist church. I also learned that only 12 percent of the county's population attends church on a given Sunday.⁹ These statistics clearly show that there are many unchurched people who could be evangelized and disciplined by Highland Baptist Church.

⁸ Personal conversation with author, September 14, 2015.

⁹ "County Membership Report: Shelby County, Kentucky," Association of Religion Data Archives, accessed August 06, 2015. <http://www.thearda.com>.

As I began to get to know Highland Baptist, I learned that the membership is primarily Anglo with less than ten African Americans and Asians. There are no Hispanics in the congregation although the percentage of Hispanics in Shelby County is three times the commonwealth's rate.¹⁰ Currently, HBC claims more than 475 members, and worship attendance hovers around 220. On average, worshippers live within a six-mile radius of the church.¹¹

I also found that for some time the church had been inwardly focused. I realized that if HBC is to reach its changing community and beyond, then leaders must emerge who can be trained to take the church in a new direction. After studying the community dynamics and HBC's history and current approach to ministry, I came to believe that the church must develop leaders who are empowered and unleashed to lead from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths in the church, the community, and beyond. I came to believe that the church needs a new ministry style and a new breed of leaders.

Additionally, I found that HBC was mired in an organizational structure that focused on listing a set of leadership positions and then finding people to fill those positions, sometimes without considering the spiritual gifts and strengths of the individuals being asked to serve. This approach sets in stone ministry programs and committee structures that do not necessarily meet the 2016 needs of the church. I came to believe that the church needs to implement a gifts and strengths discovery process so leaders can be properly positioned to serve in the church's ministry.

¹⁰ US Census Bureau, "State & County QuickFacts."

¹¹ See Appendix 1, "Highland Baptist Church, August 2015 Survey."

Developing leaders and helping them live out their call as disciples of Jesus in their community and beyond is not new to me. In fact, this has been at the heart of my twenty-seven-year ministry in the churches I have served. The discipleship methods used by both Jesus and Paul have always inspired me to persuade Christ followers to discover, develop, and practice leading from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths. Throughout my ministry I have sought to follow Jesus' example of developing his disciples through transformational teaching (Matthew 5-7) and by modeling dynamic personal devotional habits (Luke 1:35) and effective ministry practices (Matthew 4:23). Paul's mentoring of Timothy, his "true son in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2), has prompted me to help leaders mature in their leadership skills.¹²

Continuing with my life-long ministry passion, in this pilot project I will help selected HBC leaders discover or reaffirm their call from God and then identify, discover, and successfully practice leading from their God-given gifts and strengths. Then they, in turn, will be able to help other HBC members do the same. As this process is duplicated, many HBC members will implement their discovered gifts and strengths in the internal and external ministries of HBC. This application of gifts and strengths will set in motion and ultimately strengthen the church's efforts to engage the changing community culture and reach the world for Christ. I believe this will change the church.

The thesis of this doctoral project is that selected leaders at Highland Baptist Church will learn how to lead from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths in the church's ministry through participating in a pilot project that will focus on identifying,

¹² All Scripture quoted is from the *Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011) unless otherwise noted.

developing, and then practicing leading from that calling and those gifts and strengths. This process will occur over a period of fifteen months. I will lead the pilot project.

Part One of this project will focus on the ministry context. The history and demography of the community will be described. The church's history and cultural setting will be explored. Then, the mission, beliefs, and practices of the church will be examined. Implications drawn from both the community demography and the church setting will be analyzed.

Part Two will focus on the biblical and theological concepts germane to the character and practices of a church leader. Several relevant resources designed to encourage leaders to be influential in their settings will be reviewed. Barnabas will be presented as a biblical model of leadership.

Part Three of the project will focus on the ministry strategy. Attention will be given to the project goals and implementation processes. A proposed evaluation plan of the project processes to assess whether the project goals were met will also be included.

Finally, the expected outcomes and insights from the project will be summarized. Implications for the ministry of Highland Baptist Church along with next steps for developing additional Highland Baptist leaders will be presented. Applications for other evangelical churches will also be suggested.

The need is evident: If Highland Baptist Church is to be relevant in the future then it must develop a new breed of leaders. They must know their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths and lead from their calling, gifts, and strengths. To lead effectively, they will also need to understand the community in which HBC is located as well as the culture of their church. This will be the focus of Chapter 1.

CHAPTER 1

COMMUNITY AND CHURCH CONTEXTS

Veteran church growth specialist Eddie Gibbs writes that today “the church faces cultural shifts of seismic proportions. Many of the changes occurring all around us are no longer predictable and incremental, but unforeseeable and chaos-producing.”¹ He further writes that “churches that fail to read and accurately interpret the signs of the times risk a bleak future.”² Additionally, he writes that church leaders need to understand that these seismic changes and the specific changes that exist in the local community must be addressed by “a different kind of leader – one who has a missional conviction and the cross-cultural training required to operate in today’s pluralistic environment.”³

Highland Baptist Church does not exist in a vacuum; it exists in that changing world. If it is to be successful in reaching its community for Christ, its leaders not only must be aware of the broader societal changes of which Gibbs writes but they must also understand the changing nature of the particular community in which HBC is located.

¹ Eddie Gibbs, *LeadershipNext: Changing Leaders in a Changing Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 10.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 52.

While the cultural values of that community may have been relatively static in the past, sociological changes now have rendered those values more fluid. HBC leaders must accept and make sense of those changes.

HBC leaders must also understand the history and changing culture of their church. Past experiences in the church, including good times and difficult times, must be acknowledged and addressed. How leaders process past history and experiences will influence how they respond to the new approach to leadership and ensuing ways of doing church proposed in this project.

This chapter will focus specifically on descriptions of the community in which HBC is located and of the church itself. Emphasis will be given to the fact that the community is in transition from being a farming community to a bedroom community of two nearby cities. Population trends and changes in the residential and business landscapes will be documented. This chapter also will include a brief history of HBC and a description of the current church culture. Implications for HBC's future ministry and the value of leaders who can lead from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths in the midst of change will be drawn from both the community and church data.

The Community

A local congregation is a community that exists within a community. As such, researchers Nancy Eiesland and Stephen Warner assert there is value in "seeing the

congregation in context.”⁴ A church that understands its context, including history, current changing dynamics, and socioeconomic and cultural factors, is well suited to engage its community for Christ.

Shelby County History

In 1780, frontiersman Daniel Boone’s younger brother Squire founded the first settlement in what became known as Shelby County.⁵ He named it “the Painted Stone Station” and laid claim to the land by writing his name and the date of the founding with red paint on a stone as a marker.⁶ Twelve years later, sixteen days after the Commonwealth of Kentucky had been admitted as the fifteenth state in the Union, Shelby County was formed on June 16, 1792. That October, the town of Shelbyville was established and made the county seat.⁷ Isaac Shelby had been named the first governor of the commonwealth and Shelby County was named for him.⁸

By the time of the 1800 U.S. Census, 8,191 people lived in the county’s 383 square miles;⁹ 262 of those resided in Shelbyville.¹⁰ Agriculture and livestock were the

⁴ Nancy L. Eiesland and R. Stephen Warner, “Ecology: Seeing the Congregation in Context,” in *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, eds. Nancy T. Ammerman, et al (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 40.

⁵ R. R. Van Stockum Sr., “Shelby County,” in *The New History of Shelby County, Kentucky*, ed. John E. Kleber (Prospect, KY: Harmony House Publishers, 2003), 74.

⁶ Vince Akers, “Frontier Shelby County,” in *The New History of Shelby County, Kentucky*, 31.

⁷ Charles T. Long, “Shelbyville,” in *The New History of Shelby County, Kentucky*, 79.

⁸ Stockum Sr., “Shelby County,” 74.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Long, “Shelbyville,” 79.

economic base of the county,¹¹ and workplaces in the town supported that farm economy.¹² By the end of the 1900s, tobacco, corn, soybeans, hay, beef, and dairy cattle had become the featured farm products. In 1891, the first American Saddlebred horse was registered in Shelby County,¹³ which, over time, would become important to the area.

In the late 1700s and early 1800s, the first churches were constituted in Shelby County. Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists were represented in those early churches. In 1810, the Methodists built Shelbyville's first church building, which was called "Shelbyville Meeting House" and was shared with the Baptists and Presbyterians who did not have their own buildings. By 1820, however, both First Baptist Church and First Presbyterian had constructed their first buildings.¹⁴ At First Baptist Church, whites and blacks worshipped at the same location until 1859 when the "Colored Baptists" organized and purchased their first building.¹⁵ In 1860, the Catholic Church of the Annunciation building was dedicated.¹⁶

As for travel, in the early days, there were buffalo traces used by American Indians (Native Americans) and dirt roads traveled by settlers. The first main thoroughfare through the commonwealth passed by the Painted Stone Station and was

¹¹ Stockum Sr., "Shelby County," 76.

¹² Long, "Shelbyville," 79.

¹³ Stockum Sr., "Shelby County," 77.

¹⁴ Ted L. Igleheart, "Churches in the County and Towns," in *The New History of Shelby County, Kentucky*, 202.

¹⁵ Maureen Ashby, "Clay Street Baptist Church," in *The New History of Shelby County, Kentucky*, 219-220.

¹⁶ J. Quintin Biagi, "Catholic Church of the Annunciation," in *The New History of Shelby County, Kentucky*, 211.

called the “big dirt road.” In the 1800s, inns and taverns dotted the landscape and provided a respite for travelers. Around 1825, Midland Trail, which was the main east-west thoroughfare, became “Kentucky’s first macadamized road” so that it could accommodate stagecoaches.¹⁷ By the early-to-mid 1900s, Midland Trail had become U.S. 60 and was upgraded with state funding to handle modern motor vehicles.¹⁸ By 1871, a railroad was operational from Shelbyville to neighboring Jefferson County. By the 1920s, bus service was available to nearby Louisville and Lexington.¹⁹

In 1961, five years after President Dwight D. Eisenhower inaugurated the U.S. interstate road system, Interstate 64 opened in Shelby County. According to county historian Charles T. Long, that enabled industry and housing developments to flourish. He writes that it also “forced Shelby County to change, to confront new challenges, and accept new ideas in its economy, government, and social structure.”²⁰ Those changes continue to this day.

Transition: From Farming Community to Bedroom Community

Shelby County was a farming community for the first 200 years of its history. In the last two decades, however, that has begun to change. While most of the county has continued to maintain a strong agricultural base, Shelbyville and the western part of the county have begun the transition to becoming bedroom communities of nearby Louisville

¹⁷ Ted L. Igleheart, “Roads and Turnpikes,” in *The New History of Shelby County, Kentucky*, 374.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 374-375.

¹⁹ Charles T. Long, “Transportation,” in *The New History of Shelby County, Kentucky*, 365.

²⁰ Charles T. Long, “Interstate 64,” in *The New History of Shelby County, Kentucky*, 373.

and Frankfort. In 2000, 59 percent of the population lived in rural areas.²¹ By 2010, this decreased to less than half (47 percent).²² Today, most residents work in either Louisville or Frankfort with nearly seven of ten (68.3 percent) employed residents commuting out of the county for work.²³

From 2000 to 2005, there was a surge in single family home construction ranging from 307 to 479 new homes followed by a steady decline to 106 new single family homes in 2009.²⁴ The resurgence in the county's population in the last five years is reflected in changes in the physical make-up of the community. From 2010 to 2014, the population grew from 42,074 to 44,875 – a 6.7 percent increase,²⁵ which resulted in the need for additional housing. In 2013, for example, the county granted 149 single-family building permits. In 2014, that number increased to 213.²⁶ Many new businesses and industrial parks have been added in recent years as well. By 2013, there were sixty-eight industrial related employers and seven industrial parks.²⁷

²¹ “Welcome to Shelby County, Kentucky,” Local Census: America’s United Information, accessed September 29, 2015, <http://www.localcensus.com/county/Shelby/Kentucky>.

²² US Census Bureau, “State & County QuickFacts: Shelby County, Kentucky,” accessed July 11, 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov>.

²³ “Workforce Data,” Shelby County Industrial & Development Foundation, accessed August 22, 2015, <http://www.shelbycountyindustrialfoundation.com>.

²⁴ “Shelby County, Kentucky (KY),” City-Data.com, accessed September 29, 2015, http://www.city-data.com/county/Shelby_County-Ky.html.

²⁵ US Census Bureau, “State & County QuickFacts.”

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ “Workforce Data.”

Shelbyville Today

As described in the Introduction, Shelbyville is situated near the center of Shelby County and serves as the county seat with a population of 14,985. It is strategically located between Louisville, the commonwealth's largest city, and Frankfort, the state's capitol. Interstate 64 connects all three locations.²⁸ Additionally, Shelbyville is only fifty miles from Lexington, the heart of the Bluegrass.

Shelbyville's population has steadily risen over the past fifteen years. During that time period, the number of residents increased from 10,812 in 2000 to 14,049 in 2010. In 2014, 14,985 people called Shelbyville home.²⁹ (Simpsonville, which is located about twelve miles to the west, is second in size in the county with a population of 2,615.³⁰)

With its downtown streets lined with antique shops, cafes, churches, and law offices, Shelbyville proudly announces its southern charm. Accentuating the charm are the surrounding acres and acres of gently rolling farmland. Dairy, grain, and tobacco farms dot the landscape. As noted in the Introduction, the eighty working horse farms in the county continue the American Saddlebred tradition begun in 1891. Old money and new money blend together to sustain the economy of the county.

²⁸ "Workforce Data."

²⁹ US Census Bureau, "State & County QuickFacts: Shelbyville (city), Kentucky," accessed September 04, 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov>.

³⁰ US Census Bureau, "Simpsonville city, Kentucky, 2013 Population Estimate," accessed August 24, 2015, <http://www.census.gov>.

Key Socioeconomic Factors

Mirroring the demography of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, about one fourth (24.4 percent) of Shelby County residents are under the age of eighteen while 13.6 percent are over the age of sixty-five. As in the commonwealth as a whole, the median age of residents in Shelby County is thirty-eight years. Additionally, as in Kentucky, the male-female ratio is similar: Kentucky is 50.8 percent female and Shelby County is 51.6 percent female.³¹

As in most rural and suburban counties in Kentucky, the vast majority of Shelby County residents self-identify as White. In fact, eight out of ten (80.8 percent) do so. For most of the county's history, the largest minority group was African American. This dates back to at least the 1800 "Second Census of Kentucky" when 1,487 African American slaves were included in the total county population of 8,191.³² In recent years, however, Hispanics have become the largest minority group. Now, Hispanics comprise 9 percent and African Americans comprise almost 8 percent (7.8 percent) of the population. By comparison, African Americans comprise 8.2 percent and Hispanics 3.3 percent of the commonwealth's population.³³ As a result of the influx of Hispanics, 2.8 percent of Shelby County residents are not proficient in English, which is nearly three times the commonwealth rate.³⁴

³¹ US Census Bureau, "State & County QuickFacts: Shelby County, Kentucky."

³² University of Kentucky Libraries, "Notable Kentucky African Americans Database," accessed September 07, 2015, http://nkaa.uky.edu/record.php?note_id=2564.

³³ US Census Bureau, "State & County QuickFacts: Shelby County, Kentucky."

³⁴ "How Healthy Is Your Community?" County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, accessed September 29, 2015, <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org>.

In education, 85 percent of Shelby County residents age twenty-five and older have a high school diploma. Nearly 24 percent (23.8 percent) have earned a bachelor's degree.³⁵ Both of these are higher than the commonwealth averages (83 percent high school diploma; 21.5 percent bachelor's degree) but lower than the national averages (86 percent high school diploma; 28.8 percent bachelor's degree).³⁶

The median income in Shelby County is \$57,298, which is above both the commonwealth (\$43,036) and national (\$53,046) averages.³⁷ As a result of close proximity to both Louisville and Frankfort, many Shelby County residents travel to these larger cities to work in health care, technology, business, and governmental offices. Working in these larger markets that offer higher paying jobs contributes to a higher median income in the county. In 2013, 12.4 percent of residents lived in poverty, which is about 6 percent lower than the commonwealth's rate of 18.8 percent.³⁸ Of that 12.4 percent, four out of ten (41 percent) residents were Hispanic and two out of ten (22.2 percent) were Black.³⁹ In May 2015, the unemployment rate in Shelby County was 4.1 percent, lower than the commonwealth's rate of 5.1 percent.⁴⁰

³⁵ US Census Bureau, "American Fact Finder, Shelby County, Kentucky," accessed September 04, 2015, <http://www.factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>.

³⁶ US Census Bureau, "State & County QuickFacts: Shelby County, Kentucky."

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ "Shelby County, Kentucky (KY)."

⁴⁰ Kentucky Career Center, accessed September 30, 2015, <https://kylmi.ky.gov>.

Key Cultural Factors

Despite the presence of more than sixty Christian congregations in Shelby County in 2015, the Church is moving from its place in the center of community culture.⁴¹ If Sunday morning worship attendance is used as the criteria for marking church involvement, then the Shelby County statistics reveal the story all too well: on any given Sunday, only 12 percent of residents are in church. By comparison, in 2000, the percentage of Sunday morning worship attenders was 13.2 percent.⁴²

According to researcher Gabe Lyons, such a trend represents one of three “unprecedented characteristics” that have occurred as the “tectonic plates of our culture have moved”⁴³ He writes that the role of the church has been “reduced...in people’s lives. Instead of anchoring their center, some churches have become a convenient location where Christians can drop in without interrupting their normal routines.”⁴⁴

Though the role of the church in Shelby County is diminished, the role of the family remains intact. Family is the glue, the cohesive structure that defines the community’s values. The frantic pace of the workweek, heavy school schedules, and ever-increasing extracurricular activities have families struggling to find consistent times to gather together each week. In spite of all this, however, Sunday lunch together remains a fixture on many family calendars. While every person in a family may not choose to

⁴¹ US Religious Census, “2010 U.S. Religious Census – Religious Congregations and Membership Study,” accessed September 30, 2015, <http://www.USReligionCensus.org>.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Gabe Lyons, *The Next Christians: The Good News About the End of Christian America* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2010), 21.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 25.

attend a church worship service, they all will make the Sunday family gathering either in a home or a local favorite restaurant a priority.

Ethnically, as previously documented, until recent years Shelby County was predominantly White with a small minority of Blacks. In the mid-1990s, however, male seasonal migrant farm workers from Mexico began coming to work in the tobacco fields and on the horse farms. Later, some found employment in the home-building industry. Over time, many of those men decided to stay in the county and bring their families to join them. Soon families from Honduras, Venezuela, and other Central and South American countries came to Shelby County to live and work. In the space of about twenty years, these new arrivals have changed the ethnic face of the county as the Hispanic population now exceeds the Black population. In 2015, more than a half-dozen Mexican restaurants and grocery stores existed in the county.⁴⁵ National chain grocery stores and a chain retail center now prominently display Spanish-language signs and carry items catering to the needs of their new customers. Plus, seven new Spanish-speaking churches now serve the Hispanic community: one is Catholic and six are evangelical, including two Southern Baptist congregations.

Another factor that is shaping current Shelby County culture is the newly emerging rural/urban mix. Shelby County leaders are trying to find a balance between holding on to small-town and rural charm while attracting new businesses and industries that will bring greater economic prosperity to the community. While many residents realize that a rural/urban mix is the best of both worlds in that they can enjoy rural living

⁴⁵ “Shelbyville, Simpsonville, Shelby County Tourism,” Shelby County Tourism & Visitors Bureau, accessed August 23, 2015, <http://www.visitshelbyky.com/community/>.

with access to the amenities of nearby cities, others feel the charm and rich history of the county is being ignored. They oppose industries taking farmland and big box stores destroying longstanding downtown businesses. They often are heard to say that they wish the newcomers would “go back to where they came from.”

Implications for Ministry

Two major implications emerge for the ministry of Highland Baptist Church from this study of the community context in which the church exists. They are the following:

First, because the Church is no longer at the center of the culture, HBC leaders must face the fact that what it means to be a church member is changing. As researcher Thom Rainer writes, this means that “many...church members have lost the biblical understanding of what it means to be a part of the body of Christ.”⁴⁶ According to seminary professor Hershael York, the church is “God’s Plan A for teaching, training, accountability, correction, and a host of other essential activities in a Christian’s life.”⁴⁷ In light of this, HBC leaders must find ways to remain true to the church’s biblical convictions about church membership while recognizing cultural changes.

Second, in light of the changing ethnic makeup of the community, HBC leaders must lead church members to appreciate this new diversity and find ways to build bridges between Whites, African Americans, Hispanics, and other ethnics. Leaders must develop

⁴⁶ Thom S. Rainer, *I Am a Church Member: Discovering the Attitude that Makes the Difference* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2013), 5.

⁴⁷ Hershael York, “6 Reasons Church Is Not Optional for Seminary Students,” accessed September 28, 2015, <http://www.sbts.edu/blogs/2015/09/03/6-reasons-church-is-not-optional-for-seminary-students/>.

and live out a missiology that engages church members in facing the fact that no longer are the peoples of the world just “over there” but they have moved next door. The days of a “pray-and-give”-only missiology are over.

The Church

A congregation’s culture, according to Nancy Ammerman, is “who we are and all the ways in which we reinforce and recreate who we are.”⁴⁸ This, she writes, includes the “congregation’s history...symbols, rituals, and worldview.”⁴⁹ That culture, she concludes, is “shaped by the cultures in which its members live (represented by their demographic characteristics), but it takes on its own unique identity and character when those members come together.”⁵⁰

History

Highland Baptist Church began as a mission/church plant of First Baptist Church in Shelbyville, Kentucky, on May 07, 1941. It was constituted as a church in February 1949 with sixty charter members.⁵¹ From its beginning until 1951, the church met in a house that at the time was on the eastern outskirts of Shelbyville. In 1951, the church relocated to the Highlands area east of Shelbyville to accommodate a growing

⁴⁸ Nancy T. Ammerman, “Culture and Identity in the Congregation,” in *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, 78.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Allen Clark, “Highland Baptist Church,” in *The New History of Shelby County, Kentucky*,” 238.

membership. By that time, the resident membership was 149. On October 08, 1958, the church became known as Highland Baptist Church after having been known as Second Street Baptist Church and Second Baptist Church.⁵²

In 1964, HBC purchased the church's current property, 9.6 acres on State Highway 53. The first sanctuary built on the site was completed by late 1967 and seated more than 200. The first service in that building was held in January 1968. As the church continued to grow numerically through the years, a larger sanctuary in 1985 and activities building in 2006 were added. Resident membership had increased from 315 in 1960 to 565 in 1970 and then to 621 in 1980. It stayed level for the next decade before declining to 443 in 2000 and then rebounding to 533 in 2010. By June 2014, membership had fallen to 455. In August 2015, membership had grown to 476.

Congregational Culture

Highland Baptist Church's current congregational culture is strongly shaped by several major factors. Among these are a conservative theological tradition and the congregational form of church governance. Additionally, the church's recent history, the current median age of its members and attenders, and an inward focus are factors in its culture.

First, in keeping with its Southern Baptist denominational affiliation, HBC holds the Bible in highest regard. Like most Southern Baptist churches, HBC has been "a people of the Book," dedicated to teaching and preaching "the inspired written record of

⁵² Allen Clark, "Highland Baptist Church," 238.

God's revelation to men."⁵³ Everything is seen through the lens of the Bible. In fact, the first doctrinal sentence of the church's constitution reads as follows: "We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired word of God and the authoritative basis for our beliefs."⁵⁴

Sunday morning Bible study, or "Sunday school," and worship services are built around the preaching of God's Word. Both are the primary practices that accentuate the church's focus on the Bible. Both expositional and topical preaching styles are accepted as long as the sermon is tightly tied to the biblical text and is applicable to the hearers. While Sunday school does include opportunities for prayer and fellowship, faithfully teaching the Scripture is seen as a marker of whether the church is holding true to the Bible as the bedrock. Most HBC teachers prefer to use Southern Baptist resources for facilitating Sunday school because of the denomination's commitment to proclaiming the truths of God's Word.

Second, HBC is an autonomous congregation and follows a congregational form of governance. In his book *Theology for the Community of God*, theologian Stanley Grenz explains that in the congregational or independent model "Christ's authority functions immediately in each local fellowship." This stands in contrast to the episcopal or hierarchal model, found most notably in the Roman Catholic Church, whereby "Christ's authority flows to the congregations through ordained persons who are ultimately responsible for the church as a whole." The congregational model also differs from the presbyterian or representative model in which "the people delegate Christ's

⁵³ Herschel H. Hobbs, *The Baptist Faith and Message* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1971), 19-20.

⁵⁴ "Article V – Statement of Doctrines," Constitution, Highland Baptist Church, Shelbyville, Kentucky (Shelbyville, Kentucky: Highland Baptist Church, 2002; unpublished document).

authority to a body of persons – both clergy and laity – who then act on their behalf.”⁵⁵

HBC’s statement on polity reflects the congregational model: “The authority, given to us by Christ, to reach decisions for governing the affairs of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it.”⁵⁶

HBC follows the traditional Southern Baptist model of pastor and deacons as the two officers of a local church.⁵⁷ These are identified in Philippians 1:1 where they are called overseers and deacons. A pastor’s role is first and foremost the “leader of the church,” writes Southern Baptist statesman Roy Edgemon.⁵⁸ He cites 1 Timothy 5:17-19 and 1 Peter 5:1-5. Edgemon also writes that a pastor is an equipper of the saints.⁵⁹ As for the biblical role of a deacon, Grenz offers the images of “a table waiter, a servant, and an assistant.”⁶⁰

At HBC, the pastor and other ministerial staff members are called by congregational vote after having been identified, interviewed, and presented for vote by a church-nominated search team. Responsibilities and expectations of the pastor and staff members are outlined in the church by-laws.⁶¹ Deacons are nominated by church

⁵⁵ Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 550.

⁵⁶ “Article IV – Statement of Polity,” Constitution, Highland Baptist Church, Shelbyville, Kentucky.

⁵⁷ Roy T. Edgemon, *The Doctrines Baptists Believe* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1988), 120.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 559.

⁶¹ “Article III – Relating to Church Officers and Committees,” By-Laws, Highland Baptist Church Shelbyville, Kentucky, (Shelbyville, Kentucky: Highland Baptist Church, 2002; unpublished document).

members, with those receiving the largest number of nominations and meeting scriptural and by-law qualifications being asked to serve. The deacons employ a gift-based team ministry model suggested by the denomination. Lay leaders of church ministries are elected by the church in business session after having been asked to serve by nominating team members. Most positions are filled with individuals according to their willingness and, to a limited extent, their giftedness.

Third, HBC is shaped by its recent history. During the years 2001 to 2004, HBC's resident membership grew from 401 to 464 and its average worship attendance surged from 167 to 288. In 2009, after five years of plateaued worship attendance, the church experienced decline to 207 in 2012. By August 2014, the number bottomed out at 150 due to two years of pastoral and staff transition and church conflict.

The two years of transition from 2012 to 2014 were marked by discord in business meetings over constitution and by-laws issues, the use of the church building by another Christian group, and ramifications of the sudden resignation of a long-tenured church staff member. Minutes of the October 2013 business meeting indicate the level of tension that existed when a motion about reorganizing the by-laws was withdrawn "indefinitely," and the deacons, personnel committee, and stewardship committee were jointly assigned the sensitive task of handling the resigning staff member's controversial severance package.⁶² The volatility of those meetings poisoned the atmosphere and dampened the spirit of the church. The fallout included disheartened and disengaged church members and the decision of some members to look for a new church home.

⁶² "October 2013," Business Meeting Minutes, Highland Baptist Church, Shelbyville, Kentucky (Shelbyville, Kentucky: Highland Baptist Church, 2013; unpublished document).

Those tumultuous times came on the heels of a difficult year in youth ministry when HBC's youth minister was called to another Shelby County church in February 2012. The proximity of his new place of service and his strong ties to certain youth and their families led to a mass exodus of those families over a six-month period. These losses coupled with a large group of high school seniors who graduated in 2014 decimated the church's youth ministry.

Fourth, HBC is shaped by the current age of its members. According to a September 2015 in-house survey, the median age of HBC members/attenders is fifty-four years.⁶³ This is sixteen years higher than the thirty-eight-year median age of Shelby County residents. Further, HBC members/attenders above age sixty-five number 116 while children and youth number fifty-four.

Fifth, for several years HBC has been primarily inwardly focused. An inwardly focused church, according to writer Earl Creps, is one that has "failed to look out the windows at the surrounding community."⁶⁴ In 2014, one long-time HBC leader even admitted that the church was not "relevant in the community."⁶⁵ Researcher Thom Rainer warns that being inwardly focused rather than having "a DNA of going" is one factor that leads to church decline.⁶⁶ Over the years, HBC became satisfied with what author Reggie McNeal describes as the attractional model where "the church is a place to frequent and

⁶³ See Appendix 1, "Highland Baptist Church, August 2015 Survey."

⁶⁴ Earl Creps, *Off-Road Disciplines: Spiritual Adventures of Missional Leaders*, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 17.

⁶⁵ Personal conversation with author, August 2014.

⁶⁶ Thom S. Rainer, *I Will: Nine Traits of the Outwardly Focused Christian* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2015), 60.

to support” instead of the incarnational model that views the church as “the body of Christ in the world today.”⁶⁷ In response to a growing awareness of this problem, as a first step, in 2014 HBC’s leaders adopted an intentional mission statement to engage the community and world.

Mission, Beliefs, and Practices

The mission statement adopted by Highland Baptist Church in 2014 is “engaging our community for Christ.” The word “engaging” suggests an active and intentional effort to relate to the people of the Shelby County community. “Our” suggests that HBC members and attenders are to work together to make a gospel impact. “For Christ” proclaims that the church’s focus is to promote the redemptive cause of Christ and that all the church does honors him and makes him known.

HBC’s core beliefs are contained in the Baptist Faith and Message of the Southern Baptist Convention. The stated purpose of that document is “to state for its time and theological climate those articles of the Christian faith which are most surely held among us.”⁶⁸ Additionally, HBC’s constitution includes a three-page preface that summarizes the articles of faith of the church.⁶⁹

The church’s mission strategy is built on the model of the early church in

⁶⁷ Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 50.

⁶⁸ Hobbs, *The Baptist Faith and Message*, vii.

⁶⁹ “Articles of Faith for Highland Baptist Church,” Constitution, Highland Baptist Church, Shelbyville, Kentucky.

Acts 2:42-47 and centers around four verbs: worship, grow, serve, and share. HBC members and attenders are exhorted to worship God passionately, grow dynamically, serve outrageously, and share contagiously. Passionate worship involves “[ascribing] to the Lord the glory due his name” (Psalm 29:2). Dynamic growth happens when a Christ follower abides in him (John 15:4-11), studies and applies the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17), and uses his or her gifts and strengths to God’s glory (Eph. 4:11-16). Outrageous service takes place as a committed Christian follows Jesus’ model (Matthew 20:20-28; John 13:14-15) and “[serves] others” (1 Peter 4:10), along with being “salt and light” (Matthew 5:13-16) in the community and world. Contagious sharing happens when a Christian consistently builds relationships and engages in spiritual conversations (Colossians 4:2-6).⁷⁰

Implications for Ministry

Four major implications emerge for Highland Baptist Church’s ministry from this study of the church context. They are the following:

First, HBC leaders must process the church’s past, coming to terms with its recent history and recognizing both the good times and difficult times. Remembering the good times can generate memories of best practices and give leaders valuable ideas to put into play in the current climate. It also can soften the impact of change for those members who feel disoriented and wonder who “stole” the church they fondly enjoyed in the good

⁷⁰ Mark Mittelberg, Lee Strobel, and Bill Hybels, *Becoming a Contagious Christian Leader’s Guide: Communicating Your Faith in a Style That Fits You* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 114.

years.⁷¹ Reflecting on difficult times can help leaders to understand the pain members have endured, especially in the years from 2012 to 2014, and learn peacemaking skills that could prove beneficial should conflict arise again.

Second, a modified congregational governance model and a more fluid organizational and leadership style are needed. As Gibbs writes, “The new realities of postmodernity mean the future structure of the church must be fluid, flexible and capable of adjusting to diversity.”⁷² He asserts that churches must have an early church mentality and “move from a hierarchical and often highly controlling style of leadership to one that is far more decentralized and that encourages ground-level initiatives.”⁷³ Gibbs adds that if a church is to “regain lost ground it must find ways to identify leaders and develop ministry forms that are reproducible and can morph in response to the cultural mosaic.”⁷⁴ As a first step, in 2015 the HBC church staff and deacons led the church to make a by-law change that moved HBC from a committee to a team approach. This promotes involvement of all team members and reduces the risk of chairpersons making decisions without input from others. It also allows for more flexibility in responding to needs as they arise.

Third, the church must address the declining numbers of members and attenders in the under-eighteen age group and the rising numbers in the over-sixty-five age group.

⁷¹ Gordon McDonald, *Who Stole My Church? What to Do When the Church You Love Tries to Enter the Twenty-First Century* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 6.

⁷² Gibbs, *LeadershipNext*, 103.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

Church growth specialist Gary McIntosh warns, “When the average age of people in a church is ten years or more above that of the average age in the community, the church finds it is no longer able to relate to the community.”⁷⁵ As a first step, in 2015 church members voted to add a staff member who would oversee worship and youth ministries while the current minister to the next generations would shift to overseeing discipleship and family ministries. Both staff members will give attention to children and youth. A lay volunteer was also asked to become director of senior adult ministries and was tasked with being a catalyst for promoting and implementing a comprehensive senior adult ministry.

Fourth, HBC must make the transition from an internal to an external focus. To become relevant in the community, church leaders must champion the church’s mission statement of “engaging our community for Christ.” Leaders must be attentive to the spiritual and felt needs of the community and help members meet those needs. Leaders must also help church members engage the world beyond the boundaries of Shelby County. As a first step, in 2014 and 2015, HBC staff and several members served on short-term mission teams in Eastern Kentucky; Baltimore, Maryland; and Sao Paulo, Brazil. Additionally, in 2015, HBC members took part in a forty-day service emphasis that involved serving alongside existing ministries in Shelbyville. These included working at a crisis pregnancy center, a homeless shelter, and a local high school.

⁷⁵ Gary L. McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church: First Steps to Restoring Health and Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 50.

Summary

In Chapter 1, the community and church contexts have been explored. Both the transitional nature of the Shelby County community and the current Highland Baptist Church culture offer opportunities for HBC leaders to develop and practice their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths in new and relevant ways. As they initiate ministries designed to strengthen the church and engage the community for Christ, HBC will fulfill its mission to worship God passionately, grow dynamically, serve outrageously, and share the gospel contagiously.

In Chapter 2, selected resources that will undergird the project both theologically and practically will be reviewed. Evangelical and Southern Baptist perspectives on leadership will be considered. The value and character formation of a leader will be studied. Tools for identifying the God-given gifts and strengths of a leader will be introduced.

PART TWO

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

Knowledge of a sampling of available literature concerning the development of leaders in a local church will be essential to the success of the new ministry initiative at Highland Baptist Church. Not only will the five leaders who will be involved in the initiative's pilot project gain an understanding of the theological underpinnings of biblical leadership but they also will be given practical tools to identify, value, and use their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths. This two-pronged approach will provide a firm foundation for leading from that calling and those gifts and strengths in the ministries of the church.

In this chapter, seven books pertinent to the ministry project will be reviewed. *Theology for the Community of God* by Stanley J. Grenz and *The Baptist Faith and Message* by Herschel H. Hobbs theologically undergird the new ministry initiative and present, respectively, evangelical and Southern Baptist perspectives on leadership. *The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization* by John C. Maxwell and *Leading from the Second Chair: Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams* by Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson identify

ways to recognize the value of a leader's influence in an organization. Specifically, Maxwell affirms the fact that a leader has influence no matter where he or she serves in an organization, while Bonem and Patterson's introduce the concept of "second chair" leaders and how they can lead from that position.

A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders by Reggie McNeal and *Stuck! Navigating the Transitions of Life and Leadership* by Terry Walling address the character formation of a Christian leader. McNeal draws attention to spiritual formation, while Walling gives instruction to leaders about how to navigate transitions as they journey through life and ministry leadership opportunities. In *Now, Discover Your Strengths*, Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton provide the foundation for an implementation and assessment process for the pilot project.

Each review will include the book's thesis and main argument. Then, the author's ideas that contribute to achieving the goal of this project will be identified. Finally, the limitations of the book as a resource for the project will be laid out.

Evangelical and Baptist Perspectives on Leadership

In his systematic theology, *Theology for the Community of God*, Stanley J. Grenz addresses six central themes of Christian doctrine "within the context of God's central program for creation, namely, the establishment of community."¹ Thus, theology, anthropology, Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and eschatology are all viewed through the lens of community. At the outset, he acknowledges that he writes from a

¹ Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), xxxi.

Baptist and evangelical perspective. The sections on theology, Christology, and ecclesiology apply most directly to this ministry project. Throughout his book, however, Grenz also weaves in salient insights regarding each of these themes.

About theology, Grenz argues that because God is first and foremost the triune God (2 Corinthians 13:14)² and because he loves the people of the world whom he created (John 3:16), he longs to be in a love relationship with his creation. Even though that relationship has been broken by sin, God still longs to be in community. Grenz argues that it is by the sacrificial and substitutionary death of Jesus that God makes possible the restoration of community.

About Christology, Grenz further writes that it is through God the Son (Christ) that the connection to God the Father is restored and the relationship is developed. He argues that “sin is ultimately our human failure to live in community with God, each other, and the natural environment” (Genesis 3:7-19) and that trusting in Christ restores that community.³ “Christ tasted alienation so that we might enjoy reconciliation,” he writes.⁴ Grenz maintains that the relationship with God is strengthened as a person continually yields to the Holy Spirit’s influence (Ephesians 5:19-21).

About ecclesiology, Grenz writes that when a person repents and responds in faith to the gospel (the good news about Christ), then that person becomes a part of a local community of faith and no longer lives in isolation. Grenz identifies a community of faith as the local church, which he calls “the eschatological covenant community”

² Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 53.

³ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 352

(Colossians 1:13).⁵ He writes that believers' "narratives, therefore, are always embedded in the story of the community in which we participate."⁶

Grenz further argues that the church is a community that has a purpose and a mandate. He submits that "the church exists for God's glory"⁷ and is tasked with worshipping God, edifying the body of Christ, and reaching into its local community with evangelistic and service ministries (1 Peter 2:9). He states that pastors, deacons, and other ministry leaders serve as catalysts to achieve the demands of the mandate.

A study of Grenz's teachings on theology, Christology, and ecclesiology will help HBC leaders in the pilot project understand and value their roles in obeying Christ's admonition to edify the Highland church body through providing care and biblical instruction to its members. They also will understand their value in answering Christ's call to reach out to the community through the proclamation of the gospel and through serving people in material and spiritual need. As they understand that the biblical model for a local church is based on the relational nature of the triune God himself, they will understand that God intends that ministry in and through a local church not be done in isolation but rather in community.

Because Grenz's theology of the community of God is theoretical, it does not address the strengths a local church leader must have in order to lead effectively nor does it address the character formation of a leader. Both of these issues are central to this ministry project. Both will be addressed in other reviewed books.

⁵ Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 463.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 425.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 487

In *The Baptist Faith and Message*, Herschel H. Hobbs explains in the introduction that the intention of his book is to produce a doctrinal study guide for Southern Baptists based on “The Baptist Faith and Message” statement of faith adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963. The purpose of that statement was “to set forth certain teachings which we believe.”⁸ Thus, Hobbs gives an overview of the foundations, basic truths, people, fulfillment, practices, and social implications of the faith from a Southern Baptist perspective. With each doctrinal teaching, Hobbs gives several supporting scriptures. He then defines terms and offers insights from relevant biblical passages. Finally, he delineates the history behind the stand Baptists take on each teaching.

Regarding the foundations of the faith, the statement of faith begins with the Holy Bible which “has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter” (2 Timothy 3:15-17).⁹ Hobbs argues that Scripture records God’s revelation to humanity. From Genesis to Revelation, they declare the message of God’s redemptive purpose through Jesus Christ.

Regarding the people of the faith, Hobbs asserts that “the church stands at the center of God’s redemptive purpose in Christ” (Ephesians 3:10-11).¹⁰ He writes that the mission of the *ekklesia* – “the called out ones” – is to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19) through announcing the gospel of redemption that recalls that Jesus paid the price for humanity’s sins by voluntarily sacrificing his life on the cross

⁸ Herschel H. Hobbs, *The Baptist Faith and Message* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1971), 18.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 67.

(1 Corinthians 6:20).¹¹ As “a people belonging to God,” the church is commanded to “declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9). Hobbs recognizes pastors and deacons as the officers of the local church (Philippians 1:1) and notes that there are additional lay leaders, such as teachers and ministry leaders, who help a church prosper.¹²

Regarding the practices of the faith, Hobbs argues that it is “every Christian’s job” to carry out the commands of the Great Commission given by Jesus in Matthew 28.¹³ He also writes that Christians should be faithful stewards of their time and talents as well as their money.¹⁴ As Christians accept these responsibilities, they will serve others and give God glory.

Reading Hobbs’ book will help leaders in the pilot project see that their roles are God-given and are mandated in Scripture as part of God’s redemptive plan. He writes that they are to be “faithful in sowing the seed and telling the story of salvation.”¹⁵ Hobbs’ statement about how God expects leaders to be faithful stewards of their time and talents will encourage HBC leaders to discover and activate their God-given gifts and strengths in telling that story.

Because *The Baptist Faith and Message* is theoretical, it does not address the strengths or the character formation of a leader. Because the book is an introductory

¹¹ Hobbs, *The Baptist Faith and Message*, 67-68.

¹² *Ibid.*, 69.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 96.

survey of Southern Baptist doctrines, it will not provide HBC leaders in the pilot project with an adequate theological background to ground them firmly in the biblical understanding of church and of the role of church leaders. Because HBC is a Southern Baptist church, however, the book will give leaders a taste of what their denomination teaches.

Recognizing the Value of a Leader

In *The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization*, John C. Maxwell sets forth the thesis that a leader can have influence from anywhere he or she works in an organization. He calls such a person a “360-Degree Leader” and writes that he or she is one who “influence[s] others in every direction – those you work for, the people who are on the same level with you, and those who work for you.”¹⁶ He addresses seven myths about leading from the middle of an organization, identifies seven challenges 360-Degree leaders face, and lays out twenty-three principles they practice. Finally, he explains how 360-Degree leaders add value to an organization.

With respect to the seven myths of leading from the middle of an organization, the “position myth” applies most directly to this doctoral pilot project. Maxwell argues that it is a myth that only leaders at the top of a group can have influence. In fact, he contends that “99 percent of all leadership occurs not from the top but from the middle of

¹⁶ John C. Maxwell, *The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 2.

an organization.”¹⁷ Yet, according to Maxwell, people often falsely believe one must have a top position or an elite title in order to lead.

With respect to the seven challenges 360-Degree leaders face, the “influence challenge” most impacts the selected HBC leaders involved in this project. Maxwell writes that leadership is more about influence than position. He maintains that 360-Degree leaders can have influence from anywhere in an organization and will gain followers as they demonstrate care, character, competency, consistency, and commitment.¹⁸

With respect to the twenty-three principles 360-Degree leaders practice, Maxwell writes that the goal is to “lead up (with your leader), lead across (with your colleagues), and lead down (with your followers).”¹⁹ To lead up, leaders should support the person at the top of the group by being a team player and exhibiting loyalty. According to Maxwell, such support will occur when the top leader is dependable, practices discernment and self-management, and continues to grow.

To lead across, leaders must look for opportunities to lead their peers. Leaders will gain the respect of their peers as, over time, they develop relationships with them. Maxwell suggests that leaders must decide to “put completing fellow leaders ahead of competing with them.”²⁰

¹⁷ Maxwell, *The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization*, 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 73-79.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 210.

To lead down, leaders must show that they value their followers.²¹ Leaders add value by creating space in their schedules to get to know those who follow them. Developing, encouraging, and rewarding them creates a similar dynamic. Maxwell advises leaders to place followers in “their strength zones.”²² He recommends that they read *Now, Discover Your Strengths* by Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton to jumpstart the process.

Maxwell’s work will help the selected HBC leaders in this pilot project understand their value to their church. Accepting his thesis will embolden them to ignore the myths and embrace the challenge to influence others from the level or position in the church organization in which they operate. Further, as HBC’s top leaders follow Maxwell’s advice to “create an environment that unleashes 360-Degree leaders,” these leaders will have opportunity to flourish as influencers.²³

While Maxwell does not seek to look through a theological lens as he addresses the topic of leadership, his principles can easily be applied to the local church. Though he does affirm the value of a leader’s character, he does not delve into the spiritual disciplines that form the character of a Christian leader. While he does point leaders to a quality strengths assessment tool, he does not provide access to that tool, which is a limitation of his book.

In *Leadership from the Second Chair: Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams*, authors Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson define a second

²¹ Maxwell, *The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization*, 211.

²² Ibid., 238.

²³ Ibid., 297.

chair leader as “a person in a subordinate role whose influence with others adds value throughout the organization.”²⁴ This role is not solely dependent upon positional authority. Rather, it has more to do with influence gained through relational leadership.

The authors’ thesis is captured by Greg L. Hawkins in the book’s foreword. He writes that “the essence of the second chair role...is about leading and managing your way through a set of paradoxes.”²⁵ Bonem and Patterson name three paradoxes or tensions: subordinate-leader, deep-wide, and contentment-dreaming.²⁶

The subordinate-leader paradox describes how a leader can have influence despite not sitting in the first chair. Subordinate, however, does not suggest a combative relationship between those serving in the first and second chair positions. On the contrary, a healthy relationship is necessary if the organization is to move forward. Bonem and Patterson write that “[j]ust like a marriage, great things can happen when first and second chair leaders work together in a close, harmonious relationship fueled by a unified vision of God’s purpose for their ministry.”²⁷

The deep-wide paradox recognizes that a second chair leader plays the role of specialist and generalist simultaneously. As a specialist, a leader works from a narrow focus. As a generalist, a leader operates from a wider perspective that often includes the entire organization. Bonem and Patterson admonish leaders that to be effective they must

²⁴ Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair: Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, ix.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

“see the big picture, even as you are continuing to serve with excellence in your functional role.”²⁸

The content-dreaming paradox allows second chair leaders to dream, and yet as they dream they must understand the limitations associated with that dreaming. The reality is that a second chair leader lives in the world of the first chair leader and may or may not see these dreams come to fruition. The challenge is to remain content.²⁹

Reading *Leading from the Second Chair* will benefit the selected HBC leaders not only because it is written from the perspective of two ministers from their church’s Southern Baptist faith tradition but also because the authors offer biblical examples as well as examples from local church ministry to support their thesis about the value of second chair leaders. Further, Bonem and Patterson bolster their thesis that “[u]ltimately, in Christ’s Kingdom, we are all in the second chair, submitting to Christ as the head.”³⁰ Reading their book will help reassure second chair HBC leaders that they can succeed and be fulfilled in whatever roles they fill in the church’s ministry. Another strength of this resource is the authors’ “A Word to First Chairs” that serves to enhance the relationship between first and second chairs.

A limitation of this book for the pilot project is that the writers do not focus on Christian character formation but rather on gaining an understanding of the paradoxes faced by second chair leaders. Also, it is not designed to identify the strengths of a leader. These issues will be addressed in other books selected for this project.

²⁸ Bonem and Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair: Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams*, 71-72.

²⁹ Ibid., 117.

³⁰ Ibid., 3.

Character Formation of a Leader

The underlying premise in *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders* is that spiritual leadership requires a work of heart. Author Reggie McNeal writes that many spiritual leaders are neglecting matters of the heart, bypassing self-care as they care for others. He argues that “heart-shaping” or spiritual formation is vital for those who lead others.³¹

McNeal contends that heart-shaping takes place within six “subplots” of a leader’s life: culture, call, community, communion, conflict, and the commonplace.³² He takes an in-depth look into the subplots of the lives of the biblical Moses, David, Paul, and Jesus. He ends his book by inviting leaders to examine themselves to see how God is at work in their own heart-shaping processes.

The subplot of culture focuses on the influences of the places a person has lived. As an example, McNeal cites Moses who by birth was a Hebrew but who lived several years in Egypt. As a result, his values, principles, and beliefs were impacted by both the Israelite and Egyptian cultures. McNeal urges leaders to “treat culture as a gift” and accept opportunities to influence culture.³³ He concludes that leaders who are shaped by culture can, in turn, shape culture.

The subplot of communion speaks to the vertical relationship with God. McNeal points out that “[in] communion, the leader strengthens the spiritual foundation that will

³¹ Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000), xiii.

³² *Ibid.*, xiv.

³³ *Ibid.*, 75.

support total leadership effectiveness.”³⁴ The subplot of community recognizes horizontal relationships that affect the leader. Among these are family of origin, current family of spouse and children, friends, and church family.³⁵

The subplots of call and conflict raise awareness of the role conflict plays in the development of a leader and how his or her understanding of call can help in dealing with it. McNeal writes that leaders often face pharaohs, Pharisees, and Goliaths who stand in opposition to their leadership. In fact, he writes that conflict comes with such regularity and vigor that leadership must be grounded in one’s call from God. As an example, McNeal mentions David who endured “the exquisite pain of being betrayed by those closest to [his] heart” during Absalom’s revolt (2 Samuel).³⁶ He also writes that Jesus’ encounters with the religious authorities can open a leader’s eyes to see that conflict can come from unexpected places (Matthew 23).

The subplot of the commonplace addresses the heart-shaping development that takes place in the “everyday, run-of-the-mill, when-nobody’s-looking activity of the leader.”³⁷ As an example, McNeal cites how David came to know God through the routine task of shepherding. In the midst of ordinary days, David’s relationship with the Lord deepened, and he later penned the astounding words of the twenty-third psalm.

³⁴ McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*, 139.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 116.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, xv.

McNeal summarizes that “[t]he capacity to see God at work in the common things of life is a hallmark of great spiritual leadership.”³⁸

The strength of this book for this project is that it addresses specific ways Christian leaders can become caretakers of their hearts. In addition to identifying the six subplots outlined above, McNeal offers practical ways to practice heart-care in each subplot. The five HBC leaders in the pilot project will be challenged to engage in spiritual formation using McNeal’s model. The limitation of this resource for the pilot project is that McNeal does not address the mechanics of performing a gifts assessment or a strengths assessment of a leader.

The thesis of *Stuck! Navigating the Transitions of Life and Leadership* is found in its title. Simply put, author Terry Walling seeks to help Christ followers effectively handle the transitions of life. He describes a transition as “a defined period of time where one phase or period of an individual’s development ends, and another phase or period needs to begin. A transition represents that in-between time.”³⁹ Walling’s goal for this book is to encourage Christ followers to avoid becoming developmentally stalled in the midst of a transition and to see how God can utilize a transition “to shape [their] destiny and character.”⁴⁰

Walling argues that there are three transitions every Christian will face in life: awakening, deciding, and finishing. The time of awakening typically takes place when a

³⁸ McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*, 34.

³⁹ Terry B. Walling, *Stuck! Navigating the Transitions of Life and Leadership* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 2008), xii.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, xi.

person is between twenty and thirty-five years old. He says that it is “birthed out of a ‘holy’ restlessness...to move into a significant life direction.”⁴¹ The person is exploring what God is calling him or her to “be and do for His glory.”⁴²

The transition of deciding is the journey to find significance in life. Most people in this stage are between thirty-five and fifty years of age. Clarity emerges during this season of life. Contribution comes as the person taps into his or her core passion.⁴³

Finishing is about leaving a legacy in an individual’s final years. Walling and his mentor, J. Robert Clinton, use the term “convergence.” Walling writes that “[convergence] is the time when all of who a Christ follower is meets what God has assigned him or her to do. It is when a Christ follower realizes ‘for this I was born.’”⁴⁴

The value of *Stuck!* is that it considers the impact life’s major and minor transitions can have on the destiny and character development of a Christian leader. A limitation of this book is that it does not take spiritual leaders through a gifts or strengths discovery process. This issue will be addressed by other resources selected for this project.

Identifying Strengths of a Leader

In *Now, Discover Your Strengths*, authors Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton implore a leader to explore and enhance strengths rather than focusing on fixing

⁴¹ Walling, *Stuck! Navigating the Transitions of Life and Leadership*, 60.

⁴² Ibid., 67.

⁴³ Ibid., 78-79.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 86.

weaknesses. They argue that leaders should “capitalize on [their] strengths and manage around [their] weaknesses.” They surmise that organizations tend to operate under wrong assumptions and would benefit by adopting a better set of assumptions, which they identify as these: “Each person’s talents are enduring and unique” and “Each person’s greatest room for growth is in the areas of his or her greatest strength.”

As a practical tool for measuring a person’s talents, Buckingham and Clifton have developed the online StrengthsFinder Profile. It uses thirty-four themes of talent that were identified by The Gallup Organization after interviewing more than two million people about their strengths. Upon completing the profile, a person will have learned that from those thirty-four themes, he or she has five dominant themes of talent called “signature themes.”⁴⁵ The goal of Buckingham and Clifton is that those who discover their strengths will “put [their] strengths to work.”⁴⁶

Now, Discover Your Strengths is essential to this project because it provides the strengths assessment tool needed for use during the implementation phase of the pilot project. Using the tool, the five selected HBC leaders will be coached in how to discover their strengths. Each leader will complete the online StrengthsFinder Profile and identify his or her five signature themes. The goal will be for the leaders to then lead from their strengths in a ministry area of their choice. The limitation of both the book and the StrengthsFinder Profile is that both speak in general organizational terms without

⁴⁵ Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, *Now, Discover Your Strengths* (New York: The Free Press, 2001), 78.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

specifically addressing the dynamics and values of the local church. While they pinpoint the strengths of a leader, they do not address the spiritual formation of a leader.

Summary

In Chapter 2, seven books pertinent to leadership in a local church ministry setting have been reviewed. In these books, the authors address evangelical and Baptist perspectives on leadership, the value of a leader, character formation of a leader, and how to identify the strengths of a leader. Some of these books undergird theologically the ministry initiative while others provide the foundation for an implementation and evaluation process for the pilot project.

In Chapter 3, a more thorough examination of relevant theological concepts will be presented. Specifically, the role of a leader in Southern Baptist ecclesiology will be explored. Additionally, a case study of the biblical character Barnabas will yield insights into the character formation of a Christian leader. Finally, three selected spiritual disciplines of a Christian leader will be examined.

CHAPTER 3

THEOLOGY OF THE NEW MINISTRY INITIATIVE

Highland Baptist Church operates out of a biblical framework that serves as a guide for its purpose for being and for how it functions. (For the church's doctrinal statement, see Chapter 2.) Even as the church faces a changing congregational culture and a changing community culture, it remains firm in its commitment to this biblical foundation. The church also remains firm in its commitment to Southern Baptist theology. Therefore, as HBC moves to a gifts and strengths-based approach to leadership, this new ministry initiative must be firmly grounded in Scripture and in the church's faith tradition.

To that end, in this chapter, the focus will be on the role, character, and spiritual disciplines of a leader in Southern Baptist ecclesiology. Because of space limitations, only Southern Baptist theology will be included. First, the role of a leader will be explored in terms of calling, giftedness, and strengths. A case will be built that all Christian leaders are called, gifted, and endowed with strengths by God. If they are to function effectively in their ministry roles, they must acknowledge that call, discover their gifts, and lead from their gifts and strengths. Second, the character of a leader will

be considered by way of a focused study of the New Testament leader Barnabas. Third, the spiritual disciplines of a leader will be underscored through an analysis of three disciplines: communion with God, submission, and a servant heart. Implications for the development of leaders at Highland Baptist Church who are God-called and gifted and who lead from those gifts and strengths will be drawn.

The Role of a Leader in Southern Baptist Ecclesiology

Southern Baptist statesmen Henry Blackaby and his son Richard Blackaby write that “*spiritual leadership is moving people on to God’s agenda* [sic].”¹ Professor J. Robert Clinton writes that such a leader has these qualities: a “God-given capacity” and a “God-given responsibility to *influence* [sic]...a specific group of God’s people...toward God’s purposes for the group.”² This God-given capacity is evidenced in the calling, giftedness, and strengths of a Christian leader.

Calling

“Spiritual leadership...is a calling,” assert the Blackabys.³ That calling always “assumes a caller. And for Christians, that Caller is the living God,” Ryan J. Pemberton

¹ Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God’s Agenda* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2001), 20.

² J. Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1988), 197.

³ Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, xi.

concludes.⁴ This is clearly seen in Scripture. From Moses' dramatic burning bush call (Exodus 3) to David's gradually unfolding call (1 Samuel 16:13) to Paul's dynamic Damascus road experience (Acts 9), Scripture highlights how it is God himself who calls leaders to advance his redemptive mission.

Further, Scripture makes clear that when God calls a believer to ministry, that call must become front and center in his or her life. It must be life's driving force. For Amos, an eighth-century B.C. shepherd and sycamore-fig tree caretaker (Amos 1:1; 7:14) – not a “professional prophet”⁵ – God's call set the course of his life: “I was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet. . . . But the LORD said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel,’” he said (Amos 7:14-15). Amos' God-ordained task was to pronounce God's judgment on the unfaithful kingdom of Israel. God's call defined how he lived out his days. Similarly, the Apostle Paul was “set apart” by God for a specific mission: to “preach [Christ] among the Gentiles” (Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:15-16). Paul's “life could not be understood apart from his call,” writes Southern Baptist author Reggie McNeal.⁶

That defining principle of God's call to ministry remains true in the twenty-first century. Today's “[s]piritual leaders need to distill out the core, the essence, of their call from God,” asserts McNeal.⁷ In Southern Baptist theology, receiving and understanding a

⁴ Ryan J. Pemberton, “Follow the Caller: What We Forgot About Vocation,” *Christianity Today*, September 2015, 65.

⁵ Alan R. Millard and John H. Stek, Notes on Amos 1:1, *The NIV Study Bible*, ed. Kenneth L. Barker (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1473.

⁶ Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 41.

⁷ Reggie McNeal, *Practicing Greatness: 7 Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 86.

call from God has always been a non-negotiable for pastors and missionaries. Southern Baptist ministers Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson, who serve at West University Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, write that one's calling "will always be at the heart of [one's] contentment."⁸ Additionally, Presbyterian theologian Frederick Buechner contends that the "place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."⁹

June McNeely, who with her husband, Gerald, served as Southern Baptist missionaries in Spain for thirty-five years, writes about the security of God's call in her book *Called! Step by Step*. The call, she writes, is "reassuring; it's not a call to hardship, rather it's a tender call to something that is a perfect fit. For Gerald and me, throughout our years in Spain – in times of frustration and discouragement as well as in times when we saw ministry dreams fulfilled – we could always return to the certainty that we were exactly where God wanted us, doing exactly what He wanted us to do."¹⁰

According to Scripture, being called and set apart for ministry is not limited to pastors such as Timothy, Bonem, and Patterson, theologians like Buechner, and missionaries like Paul and McNeely. For example, as noted above, Amos was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet; in twenty-first century parlance, he was a layperson. In like manner, a physician named Luke was called by God to write the New Testament books of Luke and Acts and also to serve as a co-worker with Paul (Colossians 4:14;

⁸ Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair: Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 131.

⁹ Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 119.

¹⁰ June Hall McNeely with Joyce Sweeney Martin, *Called! Step by Step* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2015), 1.

2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24). A successful businesswoman named Lydia was called by God to open her home as a meeting place for the church at Philippi (Acts 16:14-15, 40). Tentmakers Priscilla and Aquila were also called by God to work alongside Paul and even to instruct a new believer named Apollos in the ways of Christ (Acts 18:1-3, 18-19, 26; Romans 16:3-4).

In reality, however, in Southern Baptist life many church leaders and members have failed to understand that lay leaders are also called to ministry. Pastor Rick Warren explains the problem: “Growing up, you may have thought that being ‘called’ by God was something only missionaries, pastors, nuns, and other ‘full-time’ church workers experienced.”¹¹ He then argues that “the Bible says every Christian is called to service. Your call to salvation included your call to service.”¹²

The process of discovering one’s specific call need “not be done in isolation,” writes Pemberton in an article in *Christianity Today* titled “Follow the Caller: What We Forgot About Vocation.”¹³ He believes the quest is best done within a “community of faithful Christians who know you and are actively seeking God’s will. In community is where God’s call is most clearly discerned.”¹⁴ Thus, creating a safe environment in which Christ followers can discover and live out their calls is essential.

Creating that safe environment in which the five selected HBC leaders can discover and live out their calls will be an indispensable element in the pilot project. High

¹¹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Life: What On Earth Am I Here For?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 229.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Pemberton, “Follow the Caller,” 64.

¹⁴ Ibid.

priority will be given to encouraging and affirming the leaders throughout the project, thus giving them freedom to explore the meaning of their calls. Leading the entire church body to move from an inward focus to an outward focus as well as effectively addressing the cultural changes occurring in the community will be no small task for these leaders. Since it is expected that they will become deeply engaged in local church and community ministries, it is highly likely that their experiences will include challenges to overcome as well as victories to celebrate. When obstacles do arise, they will be reminded that it is the surety of their calls that will see them through. As Patterson notes, “at times in [my] ministry, [my] calling was all [I] had to hang onto.”¹⁵ In essence, for the five leaders the surety of their calls from God will be the ultimate safe environment. A firm sense of call coupled with the backing of the HBC congregation will be needed to strengthen the leaders’ resolve in tackling change. Being called by God to a specific task in a specific place to meet a specific need may be the only thing that will see them through.

Giftedness

Southern Baptist pastor C. Gene Wilkes defines a spiritual gift as “an expression of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer which empowers him or her to serve the body of Christ, the church.”¹⁶ Ken Hemphill, another Southern Baptist, defines a spiritual gift as “an individual manifestation of grace from the Father that enables you to serve Him

¹⁵ Bonem and Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair*, 131.

¹⁶ C. Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership: Becoming a Servant Leader* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Press, 1996), 38.

and thus play a vital role in His plan for the redemption of the world.”¹⁷ Church growth specialist Peter Wagner writes that a spiritual gift is “a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ according to God’s grace for use within the context of the Body.”¹⁸

While there is no single list of spiritual gifts in the New Testament, a compilation of gifts in various Scripture passages number at least eighteen. Wilkes writes that these are “representative lists of gifts and roles God has given to the church.”¹⁹ Systematic theologian Wayne Grudem adds that these are not “exhaustive lists of gifts” but rather “a series of different examples of gifts.”²⁰ In Romans 12:4-8, Paul lists prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, and showing mercy. Then in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, he lists wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. In 1 Corinthians 12:28-30, Paul cites healing, helping, guiding, speaking in different tongues, apostleship, prophecy, teaching, miracle working, and interpreting tongues. Ephesians 4:11 repeats apostleship, prophecy, and teaching, but also adds evangelizing and pastoring. Finally, in 1 Peter 4:9-11, Peter adds hospitality.

Just as God calls every believer to ministry, he also gifts every believer with what is needed to fulfill that calling. “God gives every believer spiritual gifts to be used in

¹⁷ Ken Hemphill, *Serving God: Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts Workbook* (Dallas, TX: The Sampson Company, 1995), 22.

¹⁸ C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1979), 42.

¹⁹ Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership*, 38.

²⁰ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 1020.

ministry,”²¹ asserts Warren. Southern Baptist statesman Roy Edgemon concurs. Gifts, he writes, “are given for service and ministry.”²² This is the clear teaching of Scripture: The Holy Spirit “distributes” spiritual gifts to each believer, “just as he determines” (1 Corinthians 12:11), and he distributes those gifts for the maturing of the individual believer (Ephesians 4:13) as well as for the “common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7). In Ephesians, Paul explains that these gifts are designed “to equip [God’s] people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Ephesians 4:12).

In First Corinthians, Paul also explains that all the gifts of every believer are needed in order for the body of Christ to function effectively (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). “A beautiful diversity in the midst of unity,”²³ is Southern Baptist researcher Thom Rainer’s description. As Paul teaches in Romans, though there are different members with a diversity of functions, there is “in Christ...one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Romans 12:5).

A clear sense of God’s call coupled with a clear sense of how he has equipped – gifted – each individual to live out that call will give HBC leaders in this new ministry initiative the confidence to move forward. Knowing that they are ministering because God has called and gifted them will give assurance that he is at work in their lives as they serve in the church, the community, and the larger world. As they rely on his calling and gifting, they will be empowered to tackle their God-given ministries. They also will have

²¹ Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, 236.

²² Roy T. Edgemon, *The Doctrines Baptists Believe* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1988), 106.

²³ Thom S. Rainer, *I Am a Church Member: Discovering the Attitude that Makes the Difference* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2013), 12.

the assurance that they are being “faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10).

Strengths

“Great leaders differ from good leaders, in part because of the degree to which they have developed and built on their strengths,” writes McNeal. He explains that this seems “counterintuitive because building on our strengths is not what our culture teaches us. Our culture focuses on weaknesses, not on strengths.”²⁴ Marcus Buckingham and Donald Clifton, pioneers in the secular strengths field, declare this approach “revolutionary.”²⁵ They define a strength as the ability to provide “consistent near perfect performance in an activity”²⁶ and contend that leaders excel when they “capitalize on [their] strengths...and manage around [their] weaknesses.”²⁷

Leading from one’s God-given strengths and talents/abilities is a natural fit with a leader’s calling and giftedness, write Albert Winseman, Donald Clifton, and Curt Liesveld who are consultants in both the secular and religious strengths fields.²⁸ They explain that “[y]our calling is what God wants you to do with your life; your talents and strengths determine how you will get it done. When you discover your talents, you begin

²⁴ McNeal, *Practicing Greatness*, 68.

²⁵ Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, *Now, Discover Your Strengths* (New York: The Free Press, 2001), 5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁸ The terms “talents,” “abilities,” and “strengths” are used interchangeably in both the secular and religious strengths fields.

to discover your calling.”²⁹ They further write that “[i]dentifying your talents isn’t intended to take the place of identifying your Spiritual Gifts, but rather, it can be a powerful way to enhance your Gifts and calling. Your Spiritual Gifts help you find *what* [sic] the ministry is that God wants to see you accomplish; your talents are God’s ways of showing *how* [sic] you will accomplish it.”³⁰

Warren argues that because one’s abilities/talents are God-given then “they are just as important and as ‘spiritual’ as your spiritual gifts.”³¹ Winseman, Clifton, and Liesveld agree. They write that it is God who has graced each individual with a “unique mix of talents” and that these talents must be put into play in one’s ministry endeavors.³²

A look at Exodus 31 confirms Warren’s conclusion. In this passage, it is God himself who gives “all kinds of skills” and provides individuals with specific abilities (Exodus 31:3,6). He gifts Bezalel with the skills “to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts” (Exodus 31:4-5). He also equips the workers with the abilities to make “the tent of meeting, the ark of the covenant law with the atonement cover on it, and all the other furnishings of the tent . . . and also the woven garments. . . . And the anointing oil and fragrant incense for the Holy Place” (Exodus 31:7-11). Using their talents (abilities/strengths) was God’s way of showing them how to accomplish his will.

²⁹ Albert L. Winseman, Donald O. Clifton, and Curt Liesveld, *Living Your Strengths: Discover Your God-given Talents, and Inspire Your Congregation and Community* (Washington, D.C.: The Gallup Organization, 2003), x.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 189.

³¹ Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, 242.

³² Winseman, et al, *Living Your Strengths*, 10.

The results of leading from one's strengths can be seen in the life of the Apostle Paul. It is clear from Scripture that after he became a Christ follower, Paul put his strengths – a combination of talents, skills, and knowledge³³ – to work for God's glory. In essence, his strengths were harnessed to fulfill God's purpose for his life and to accomplish God's will. Before he became a Christ follower, Paul exhibited zeal (Philippians 3:6; Acts 22:3-5), an outspoken, bold nature (Acts 9:1), and a scholar's mind (Acts 22:3). After he experienced salvation through Jesus Christ, those strengths were repurposed as he set out to fulfill his God-given calling. Now, his zeal was focused on delivering the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 17:17). His outspoken, bold nature was redirected to sharing his salvation testimony and the gospel (Acts 17:22-31; 21:37-22:21). His prior theological training under Gamaliel, "the most honored rabbi of the first century,"³⁴ served him well as he regularly "reasoned" with non-believers "from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead" (Acts 17:2-3). His self-assurance and ability to take charge in even the most demanding situations served him well as seen in his experience at Mars Hill (Acts 17:22), where he confronted the Athenians' spiritual ignorance and challenged them to repent and seek "the Lord of heaven and earth" (Acts 17:24).

It is also clear from Scripture that Paul ministered out of his God-given spiritual gifts even as he employed his innate God-given strengths. For example, Scripture is clear that God had given Paul the spiritual gifts of apostleship and evangelism. He wrote to the

³³ Marcus Buckingham, *Go Put Your Strengths to Work* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 75.

³⁴ Lewis Foster, Notes on Acts 22:3, *The NIV Study Bible*, ed. Kenneth L. Barker (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1871.

Galatians that he was an ambassador sent on a gospel mission, “not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father” (Galatians 1:1). His innate zeal, boldness, and keen mind were strengths that equipped him well to live out his life-long God-given calling to evangelize and to be “an apostle to the Gentiles” (Galatians 2:8).

Developing leaders who know and lead from their God-given calling, gifting, and strengths is the ultimate goal of the new ministry initiative at Highland Baptist Church. While this author has found no research about this subject, based on his empirical observations as a pastor and teaching pastor of five churches ranging in size from 150 members to 2,500 members in the past twenty-seven years, focusing on both spiritual gifts and the attendant biblical verbiage and on strengths and the secular verbiage will have a broader appeal than just focusing on gifts or strengths alone. It is this author’s conviction that even in a church such as HBC which is strongly Bible-based, gifts language is often seen as spiritual language best suited for use within the four walls of a church, while strengths language is seen as connected to real-world living. It is this author’s belief that for some leaders in the pilot project, their default position will be spiritual gifts while for others, it will be strengths. Thus, in the pilot project, both will be included. This will allow participants to begin the project in their comfort zones and then move to understanding the other perspective as well.

The Character of a Leader: A Focused Study of Barnabas

Southern Baptist pastor Andy Stanley writes that character is a must for leaders who want to shape the future. “You can lead without character, but you won’t be a leader

worth following,” he states.³⁵ Church leadership consultant Alan Roxburgh and organizational psychologist Fred Romanuk agree. Leadership, they write, is “first about the leader’s character and formation.”³⁶ That character, they write, “requires self-knowledge and clear evidence that Jesus Christ is the center of the leader’s life, meaning, and call.”³⁷ The New Testament leader Barnabas clearly fulfills these criteria. Filled with the Holy Spirit, humble, and an encourager, he provides an excellent example of a leader.

Barnabas is an ideal study not only because he embodies these character qualities but also because he is a bridge character who spans the divide that often exists between laypersons and clergy. In Acts 4:36, he is quietly introduced as “a Levite from Cyprus.” Southern Baptist New Testament scholar John Polhill maintains that since nothing is made of Barnabas’s Levitical status in Acts, “he may never have served as a Levite.”³⁸ Polhill believes that even if Barnabas did serve, he would not have functioned as a priest but as an official “subordinate in rank” to the priests, serving in the background by “policing the temple grounds, keeping the gates, and providing the music at sacrifices and on ceremonial occasions.”³⁹ In essence, he served as a lay leader. Later in his life Barnabas’ role changed to that of missionary as he and Paul were set apart by the Holy Spirit and sent on a missionary journey (Acts 13:1-4.) In essence, he became clergy.

³⁵ Andy Stanley, *Next Generation Leader: Five Essentials for Those Who Will Shape the Future* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2003), 12.

³⁶ Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 126.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 127.

³⁸ John B. Polhill, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture, Acts, vol. 26*, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 155.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 154.

Filled with the Holy Spirit

First and most importantly, Barnabas was filled with the Holy Spirit. Luke describes him as “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith” (Acts 11:24). Theology professor Eugene Peterson renders this phrase as “confident in the Holy Spirit’s ways.”⁴⁰ Evangelist Billy Graham explains that the fullness of the Spirit means that Barnabas was continuously “under the influence” of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).⁴¹ Further, Barnabas’ surrender to the Holy Spirit’s leadership was “a long-term characteristic” of his life rather than “a momentary empowering for a specific ministry,” according to Grudem.⁴²

To be filled with the Spirit, Graham writes, is “to be controlled or dominated by the Spirit’s presence and power.”⁴³ Filled with the Holy Spirit, Barnabas exhibited a spirit of sharing when he brought the apostles the monetary proceeds of a field he sold (Acts 4:32, 37). Filled with the Holy Spirit, he encouraged the believers at Antioch “to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts” (Acts 11:23). Filled with the Holy Spirit, he ministered to those in Antioch and “a great number of people were brought to the Lord” (Acts 11:24).

If the new ministry initiative at Highland Baptist is to be successful, then the five selected leaders in the pilot project must be filled with the Holy Spirit, or as Graham writes, be continually under the Spirit’s influence. They must demonstrate that this is not

⁴⁰ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The New Testament in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, 1993), 230.

⁴¹ Billy Graham, *The Holy Spirit: Activating God’s Power in Your Life* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1978), 96.

⁴² Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 782.

⁴³ Graham, *The Holy Spirit*, 96.

a short-term filling limited to the duration of the pilot project but rather is a life-long connectedness to God and his ways. In a church centered in the teachings of Scripture and in a denomination that emphasizes a personal relationship with God, leaders will need to demonstrate how the Spirit's power fuels their lives and ministries. For some, being continually under the Holy Spirit's influence has been a life-long pattern, while for others this will be new.

As HBC moves toward more organizational efficiency, reliance on the leading of the Holy Spirit will produce a dynamic rather than a static environment. A team concept in which church members are unleashed to serve under the influence of the Spirit according to their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths will replace an arm-twisting methodology that focuses on filling vacant spots on stagnant, non-productive committees with any available and willing person. As the church steps up its efforts to engage its changing community, members will need to rely on the Holy Spirit to provide the wisdom and discernment to know when and how to move forward.

Humble

“Greatness in the kingdom of God,” writes McNeal, “is a journey toward humility.”⁴⁴ Humility, writes Bill Hull, is “Christ’s primary trait” and, therefore, “is ground zero for personal transformation.”⁴⁵ Earl Creps describes humility as “the discipline of decreasing the scale of my own story until it fits inside the Jesus story, until

⁴⁴ McNeal, *Practicing Greatness*, 1.

⁴⁵ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 158.

he defines me rather than my defining him, until Paul's words become a reality: 'For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God'" (Colossians 3:3).⁴⁶

Barnabas' life was marked by such humility. His story was subsumed in the Jesus story; his actions showed he had the "same mindset as Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). He lived out the words of Paul in Philippians 2:3: "in humility value others above yourselves." Greek professor Gerald F. Hawthorne writes that humility, the Greek noun *tapeinophrosyne* used in the Philippians verse, is "the linchpin that guarantees the success of the Christian community."⁴⁷

When Barnabas is first introduced in Acts, he is seen looking out for the interests of his fellow believers who were in physical need as he donated the proceeds from the sale of a field and "brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet" (Acts 4:36-37). Thus, he put others' needs before his own. Later, when he and Paul healed a lame man in Lystra, they both quickly turned the focus from themselves, deflecting the notion that they were gods and instead preached about "the living God" (Acts 14:15). Still later, as Paul became the more prominent of the pair, Barnabas did not part company but continued to minister alongside Paul (Acts 13:1-13). Like John the Baptist who faded into the background when Jesus appeared on the scene (John 3:30), so did Barnabas. From this point on in Acts, each time the missionary duo appears, Paul, not Barnabas, is always listed first.

⁴⁶ Earl Creps, *Off-Road Disciplines: Spiritual Adventures of Missional Leaders* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 73.

⁴⁷ Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Word Biblical Commentary: Philippians, vol. 43*, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 69.

While HBC leaders in the pilot project can be confident in doing what God has called them to do, they must humbly remember that it is God and not themselves who has called, gifted, and strengthened them to be difference makers in their church, community, and the world. They must keep their focus on the caller – God – and not the calling nor themselves as the called.⁴⁸ Whether helping the church move to an outward from an inward focus, work through church organizational changes, or find ways to address the changing ethnic makeup of their community, leaders must be careful to “value others above [them]selves,” (Philippians 2:3), thus fitting their stories into the larger Jesus story, just as Barnabas did. They must model humility as the “linchpin” if they are to be successful.

Encourager

Barnabas was an encourager, which means he had the disposition “to inspire with courage, spirit, or hope.”⁴⁹ Even his nickname spoke to that characteristic. While Joseph was his given name, the apostles nicknamed him “Barnabas” – “son of encouragement” (Acts 4:36). This was no small appellation, as Polhill explains. “The granting of a nickname,” he writes, “was often seen as a sign of respect.”⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Pemberton, “Follow the Caller,” 65.

⁴⁹ “Encourage,” Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, accessed November 30, 2015, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/encourage.

⁵⁰ Polhill, *The New American Commentary, Acts, vol 26*, 154.

Throughout his life, Barnabas lived up to his nickname. In Acts 9, when the new convert Saul/Paul⁵¹ launched his preaching ministry, Barnabas did not hesitate to encourage him and even vouch for Saul/Paul's conversion in the face of the skepticism of fellow believers. Barnabas came to his rescue, authenticating his radical transformation from terrorist to trailblazer (Acts 9:27). As a peacemaker, Barnabas was the right man for the job because he knew both parties and was capable of bringing them together. The result of Barnabas' encouragement and peacemaking was that Saul/Paul "moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord" (Acts 9:28).

Barnabas' acts of encouragement were not limited to individuals. In Acts 11, Barnabas encouraged an entire church. When news reached the mother church in Jerusalem that many people were coming to faith in Jesus in Antioch, the Jerusalem believers sent Barnabas to Antioch to check out what was happening (Acts 11:22). When he saw how God was at work there, he offered the entire church words of encouragement and as a result "a great number of people were brought to the Lord" (Acts 11:23-24). Barnabas' work in Antioch did not end there. In fact, for an entire year, he and Paul disciplined "great numbers of people" in that city (Acts 11:26). The result was that Barnabas' initial act of encouragement fueled ministry for years to come.

For the selected HBC leaders in the pilot project, learning to encourage each other as the project progresses will help them form strong personal bonds. Encouraging each other will be a strong element in fostering a safe environment in which they can fully explore their calling, giftedness, and strengths – much as Barnabas did for Saul. In the

⁵¹ Paul was called Saul before his conversion.

process, they also will be modeling for the entire church Paul's instructions for how to be a fully functioning body of Christ – much as Barnabas did for the Antioch church. In 1 Corinthians, Paul writes: “Just as the [human] body, though one, has many parts, but its parts form one body, so it is with Christ. . . . Now you are the body of Christ and each one is a part of it (1 Corinthians 12:12, 27). Again, they will be following in the footsteps of Barnabas as over the course of his life, he encouraged congregations of Christ followers by helping them learn how to function as the body of Christ.

The Spiritual Disciplines of a Leader

“Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness” (NASB⁵²), exhorts Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:7. “Godliness,” stresses Southern Baptist professor Donald Whitney, “is the goal of the Disciplines,”⁵³ which he defines as “those personal and corporate disciplines that promote spiritual growth.”⁵⁴ These disciplines are “spiritual exercises,” he writes, basing this on the Greek word *gymnasia*, which is translated in The King James Version Bible as “exercise.”⁵⁵ “Exercise thyself rather unto godliness.”

Creps explains that “an experience is a spiritual discipline if it has the *potential* [sic] to form God's heart in me, and if it *functions* [sic] as one because I embrace it as

⁵² *Holy Bible: New American Standard Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

⁵³ Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991), 17.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

such.”⁵⁶ The disciplines, writes Richard Foster, should lead a Christ follower to “center on Christ and view the Spiritual Disciplines as a way of drawing us closer to His heart.”⁵⁷ They “allow us to place ourselves before God so that He can transform us.”⁵⁸ While the list of spiritual exercises is long, this project will only consider three: communion with God, submission, and a servant heart.

Communion with God

Communion with God is knowing him through intentional interactions with him. It includes prayer and “Bible intake,” according to Whitney.⁵⁹ He views “the intake of God’s Word” as the most important of all the disciplines,⁶⁰ and describes Bible intake as hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, meditating on, and applying God’s Word.⁶¹ On the other hand, Henry and Richard Blackaby consider prayer to be “the single most important thing leaders should do” because “nothing of eternal significance happens apart from God” (John 15:5).⁶² Foster, too, believes that prayer “brings us into the deepest and highest work of the human spirit. . . . Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform

⁵⁶ Creps, *Off-Road Disciplines*, xvi.

⁵⁷ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1978), 96-97.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵⁹ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 28.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶² Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 148.

us.”⁶³ Prayer is defined as “loving communication with God”⁶⁴ by professor Scot McKnight.

Foster also values Bible study, claiming that like the other disciplines, it leads to “the total transformation of the person.”⁶⁵ The late Southern Baptist prayer leader T.W. Hunt agrees. The practice of prayer, he writes, is “a companion discipline to Bible study.”⁶⁶

Throughout the Bible, both the study of God’s Word and the practice of prayer are set forth as essential elements in the transformational process of becoming more like God. The longest psalm in the Psalter, Psalm 119, contains the declaration of a writer who “[hid] your word in my heart” (Psalm 119:11). The writer desires to know Scripture well, asking God to “teach me your decrees” and “open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law” (Psalm 119:12, 18).” In Psalm 63:1, King David writes, “I meditate on it all day long” (Psalm 63:1). He also pens this prayer: “You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you” (Psalm 63:1). David’s desire for God “fostered a communion between him and God so powerful that the very words of their conversations,” particularly in the psalms, “still inspire the communion of millions seeking after God’s heart themselves,” writes McNeal.⁶⁷

⁶³ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 30.

⁶⁴ Scot McKnight, *The Jesus Creed: Loving God, Loving Others* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2004), 14.

⁶⁵ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 54.

⁶⁶ T. W. Hunt, *The Doctrine of Prayer* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1986), 122.

⁶⁷ McNeal, *A Work of Heart*, 30-31.

In the New Testament, Jesus himself modeled both the importance of studying Scripture and of praying. Mark writes that “very early in the morning” (Mark 1:35) Jesus arose to pray and commune with his Father. Luke reports that Jesus prayed all through the night as he prepared to choose the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12-13). In times of crisis such as in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before his crucifixion, Jesus “fell with his face to the ground and prayed” (Matthew 26:39). Throughout his life, Jesus quoted Scripture. He cited texts from Deuteronomy to combat the attacks of Satan (Deuteronomy 8:3; 6:16; 6:13; Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). His Sermon on the Mount was peppered with quotes from Exodus (Exodus 20:13-14; 21:24; Matthew 5:21, 27, 38). He quoted Isaiah as he approached his death on the cross (Isaiah 53:12; Luke 22:37), and the psalms were on his lips in his final moments on the cross (Psalm 22:1; Matthew 27:46).

The Apostle Paul often called Christ followers to make prayer a part of their everyday lives. To the Ephesians, he wrote, “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people” (Ephesians 6:18). This four-fold call to prayer, writes New Testament professor Klyne Snodgrass, “underscores how important prayer is for all of life. The believer’s entire life is one large prayer to God.”⁶⁸ To the Thessalonians, Paul wrote, “pray continually” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Pastor Knute Larson notes this involves maintaining “a constant attitude of being in God’s presence.”⁶⁹ Paul also underscored the

⁶⁸ Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians*, ed. Terry Muck (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 345.

⁶⁹ Knute Larson, *Holman New Testament Commentary: I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, vol. 9, ed. Max Anders (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 74.

importance of knowing Scripture as he regularly quoted Old Testament passages in his sermons and discussions (Romans 4:3, 7-8, 17; 9:15, 25-29; 10:13, 15, 16, 18-21).

While prayer and Bible study are inward disciplines, they result in outward action, according to McNeal. “To the degree that Christian leaders nurture their communion with God, they keep sight of the best contributions they can make,” he writes. By contrast, “If the communion suffers, the mission of the leader is placed in jeopardy, in danger of being lost to trivialities or distraction.”⁷⁰ Creps writes further that missional leadership – “living the mission of God to touch the world with redeeming love in Christ” – “derives not from methods or strategies but from the work of the Holy Spirit to rearrange one’s interior life.”⁷¹

With this in mind, if the selected lay leaders in the pilot project are to lead from their God-given calling, gifting, and strengths, they must nurture consistent communion with him. Only by staying in touch with God will they be able to discern his will and rely on the Holy Spirit as they seek to address the changes needed at Highland Baptist. Then, the strategies they employ in effecting change will be Holy Spirit-driven, not human-driven.

Submission

Christ followers, according to Foster, “are commanded to live a life of submission because Jesus lived a life of submission.”⁷² Submission, according to the Blackabys, is “a

⁷⁰ McNeal, *A Work of Heart*, 32.

⁷¹ Creps, *Off-Road Disciplines*, xiv.

⁷² Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 102.

complete abandonment of one's self to God's purposes."⁷³ In no one is this better exemplified than in Jesus himself. First and foremost, Jesus "submitted himself to the will and agenda of his Father,"⁷⁴ writes Hull. This is seen most dramatically on the night before his crucifixion when in the Garden of Gethsemane he prayed to his Father, "Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39). He was fully aware that "the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father" (John 13:1) and yet he submitted, becoming "obedient to death – even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8).

Second, "Christ not only died a cross-death, He lived a cross-life...in submission to His fellow human beings," writes Foster.⁷⁵ This submission began with a posture of self-denial. Jesus practiced self-denial, for example, when he washed his disciples' feet (John 13:4-5) and when he refused to "save himself...from the cross" (Matthew 27:38-44). For Christ followers, this not only means submission to Christ but also submission to one another and involves "the freedom to give way to others," writes Foster.⁷⁶ As Paul writes in Philippians 2, it involves "not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others" (Philippians 2:4). Hull writes that this is "countercultural ...when the people of God submit to each other and live for each other."⁷⁷

For the selected HBC leaders in the pilot project, submission is as critical a spiritual discipline as is communion with God. Following Jesus' example, submitting to

⁷³ Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 100.

⁷⁴ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 158.

⁷⁵ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 101.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁷⁷ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 159

God comes as one is in communion with him and paves the way for submitting to others. As HBC sets out to make potentially divisive organizational changes and become more externally focused, leaders must model mutual submission, not having “to have [their] own way.”⁷⁸ This will free them up to make concessions when necessary and to consider “the interests of others” in ministering both inside and outside the walls of the church.

Servant Heart

“Service is not a list of things that we do, though in it we discover things to do,” writes Foster.⁷⁹ “It is not a code of ethics but a way of living. To do specific acts is not the same thing as living in the [Christian] Discipline of service. ... It is one thing to *act* [sic] like a servant; it is quite another to *be* [sic] a servant,” he insists.⁸⁰ “Servant leadership is an attitude, not a genre of narrowly circumscribed actions,” explains McNeal.⁸¹ Service, therefore, begins with having a servant heart. It is “doing good for others with no thought of ourselves,” writes Willard.⁸² As a believer serves others, Foster writes, “the result...will be the rise of the grace of humility” in one’s life.⁸³

In both his teaching and in his actions, Jesus introduced a new paradigm in a time when the culture defined greatness as having power, authority, and control. As seminary

⁷⁸ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 99.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ McNeal, *Practicing Greatness*, 4.

⁸² Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 155.

⁸³ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 114.

professor Michael J. Wilkins writes, “Greatness among the Gentiles was measured by being in a position to ‘lord it over’ others and ‘exercise authority over’ others (Matthew 20:25).”⁸⁴ Jesus redefined greatness by explaining that “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26-28). In other words, writes seminary professor David Garland, “The way to make it to the proverbial top is to get down low as a slave.”⁸⁵ Servanthood, according to Jesus, requires selflessness over and against selfishness.

As Jesus served and suffered, he modeled the new paradigm. Even on the night before his crucifixion, he expressed his servant heart when he took a basin of water and a towel and performed the menial task of washing his disciples’ feet (John 13:4-5). That servant spirit continued merely hours later when he suffered and died on the cross “to give his life as a ransom for many.” Indeed, he fulfilled the vision of the prophet Isaiah who had envisioned him as a suffering servant (Isaiah 52:13; 53:3-4). The apostle Paul likewise recognized Jesus’ servant posture as “he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant” (Philippians 2:7) in pouring out his life at Calvary.

If the five selected HBC leaders in the pilot project are to be successful, then they must embrace the paradigm shift modeled by Jesus that necessitates a servant heart.

⁸⁴ Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew*, ed. Terry Muck (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 669.

⁸⁵ David E. Garland, *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the First Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 208.

“Leadership is found in becoming the servant of all” (Mark 9:35), Foster writes.⁸⁶ Displaying servant spirits will help these leaders lay the foundation for developing a cooperative spirit among the entire body of believers as the church faces difficult organizational changes. A servant spirit will enable them to lead from any position in the church, not just from the more visible positions. Additionally, embracing their role as “the servant of all” will lay the footing for HBC to become more community minded, especially in ministering with the growing Hispanic population. Plus, these leaders will benefit personally from being servant leaders. As McNeal writes, “Most people grow the most through service.”⁸⁷

Summary

In Chapter 3, attention has been given to the God-given calling, giftedness, and strengths of a leader in Southern Baptist ecclesiology. A study of the New Testament Barnabas focused on his being filled with the Holy Spirit, being humble, and being an encourager, which are invaluable facets of a leader’s character. Communion with God through studying Scripture and through prayer, being submissive to God’s will as well as being mutually submissive with fellow believers, and having a servant heart were fleshed out as fundamental spiritual disciplines of a leader. Implications were cited for HBC leaders.

⁸⁶ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 101.

⁸⁷ Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 125.

In Chapter 4, a preferred future will be presented. Specific goals to help the five HBC leaders in the pilot project discover and practice their God-given calling, gifting, and strengths will be outlined. To accomplish the goals, a plan for helping these leaders discover and then practice leading from their calling, gifts, and strengths will be detailed.

PART THREE

MINISTRY STRATEGY

CHAPTER 4

GOALS AND PLAN

A local church is a community of faith that works together to carry out Christ's mandate "to reach out to the world," writes systematic theologian Stanley Grenz.¹ If a church is to fulfill that divine mandate, then its members must be God-called, gifted, and must lead from the strengths he has placed in them as they seek to fulfill that command. While that is the preferred future for Highland Baptist Church and is the long-range goal of this doctoral project, the first step in that process is stated in the project thesis and is the project's immediate goal: Selected leaders at Highland Baptist Church will learn how to lead from their God-given calling, giftedness, and strengths in the church's ministry through participating in a pilot project that will focus on identifying, developing, and then practicing leading from their calling, giftedness, and strengths.

As the theological investigation in this project showed, these leaders will not be alone in this endeavor because it is God himself who has called, gifted, and strengthened them to fulfill their roles in the life of the church and community. With the surety of their

¹ Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 502.

calls in place, they will be encouraged to develop characteristics befitting a God-called leader as exhibited in the New Testament Barnabas: being filled with the Spirit, humility, and being an encourager. Further, these selected leaders will be encouraged to make the practice of spiritual disciplines an essential part of their daily lives. The foundational discipline of communing with God through prayer and Bible study as well as submission to God and to fellow believers and having a servant heart will be emphasized.

With these basics in practice, these leaders will then be ready to identify, develop, and lead from their calling, giftedness, and strengths. As they model this approach to leadership and as the process used in the pilot project is replicated, in time this new paradigm will become the norm in the church. As the replication process unfolds, the church will be positioned to fulfill its stated mission of “engaging the community for Christ.”²

Genesis of the Project

The genesis of the project is embedded in the author’s fourteen-year (2000-2014) experience of discipling men while he served as teaching pastor at Crestwood Baptist Church (CBC), a church with a membership of 2,500, in Crestwood, Kentucky (metro Louisville). Even though oversight of the men’s ministry was included in his job description, in the early days it appeared that men’s ministry was going to be a minor part of his ministry. Preaching, teaching, evangelism, missions, and pastoral care were the priorities in those beginning years. Men’s ministry seemed to be limited to a large-group

² “Article II – Statement of Mission,” Constitution, Highland Baptist Church, Shelbyville, Kentucky (Shelbyville, Kentucky: Highland Baptist Church, 2016; unpublished document).

early Saturday morning men's Bible study. Soon, however, the men asked for a more comprehensive men's ministry that would include more Bible study opportunities, recreational outings, retreats, lunch and learn events, service projects, an annual father/son dinner, and discipleship groups. This author sensed that God was at work and obliged by creating a comprehensive men's ministry.

Over the years, CBC's men's ministry was instrumental in leading many men to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. Through the ministry, many men were also disciplined, helped with marriage and parenting skills, inspired through retreats and events to live for Christ, and encouraged to be a band of brothers mindful of the truth in Proverbs 27:17: "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." Although the large-group events were exciting and were often cited by church members as catalytic events in the life of the church, as this author talked with CBC men, he discovered that it was in the small-group settings that the ministry made its greatest impact. In partnership with another evangelical church in the area, CBC's men's ministry launched an intense, twenty-one-month small-group discipleship course. In the process of leading one of the small groups, it became apparent to this author that this format of intense personal study and dynamic small-group interaction was where significant transformation was taking place in the lives of the men.

At the same time, this author was engaged in discipleship triads as well as one-on-one mentoring of CBC leaders in servant evangelism, missions, and pastoral ministries. While for this author, the mentoring opportunities were gratifying, the discipleship triads with male student ministry leaders were more transformative. These ninety-minute weekly extended lunch meetings included prayer, sharing, and reflection about life

experiences during the previous week, followed by a discussion of readings from Greg Ogden's *Discipleship Essentials*³ and *Leadership Essentials*.⁴ As their encourager and confidant, it was satisfying to this author to watch the men grow as Christians and as student ministry leaders as they not only applied what they were learning to their daily lives but also in their student ministry leadership roles.

For this author, another influential experience came while writing the integration paper for Fuller Theological Seminary professor Terry Walling's Doctor of Ministry course titled "Organic Leadership Development: Shaping Leaders Who Shape Culture." In order to write the final third of the paper, this author was required to coach five men through Walling's *Focused Living*⁵ process in a weekend retreat. At the retreat, each participant created a timeline to see how God had been at work over the course of his life and then penned a statement about his core values and personal calling from God. For this author, this experience solidified his desire to continue to develop Christian leaders in small-group settings.

Soon after taking Walling's course, this author answered God's call to serve as lead pastor at Highland Baptist Church. With his recent retreat and small-group experiences in mind, he was convinced that small-group processes needed to be included in HBC's ministry if the church were to flourish. Then, as he fleshed out the thesis for

³ Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007).

⁴ Greg Ogden and Daniel Meyer, *Leadership Essentials: Shaping Vision, Multiplying Influence, Defining Character* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007).

⁵ "Get Trained," Leader Breakthru, Incorporated, accessed January 13, 2016, www.leaderbreakthru.com/training/.

this doctoral project, he included a small-group strategy as the primary methodology for the pilot project.

Overview of the Project

With his previous men's ministry experiences at Crestwood Baptist Church and his doctoral studies at Fuller Theological Seminary as background, upon his arrival as lead pastor at Highland Baptist Church, this author knew the direction in which he wanted to help the church move. He envisioned HBC embracing a new type of leader who would know and affirm his or her calling, gifting, and strengths and lead from those God-given attributes in ministry roles in the church. As he got to know HBC better (See the Introduction and Chapter 1 of this paper.), he came to believe that if the church were to effectively engage its changing community with the gospel, then this new type of leader would be essential. In particular, he wanted to use what he had learned about leadership and relational dynamics in the CBC men's ministry experience as background for the model he would present as a new paradigm for HBC leaders.

To that end, as stated above, the purpose of this doctoral project is to help selected leaders from Highland Baptist Church in Shelbyville, Kentucky, to identify, develop, and practice leading from their God-given calling, giftedness, and strengths. To achieve this purpose, a fifteen-month pilot project will be conducted with five leaders to help them discover and develop their calling, gifts, and strengths. These leaders will then be encouraged to lead from their God-given calling, giftedness, and strengths in a church ministry setting. As they begin to lead from a strong God-centered base and as they rely on him for guidance in identifying needs, these leaders will help the church develop

ministries that will meet the real needs of its changing community. The process by which this will be accomplished will be presented in detail in this chapter and in Chapter 5.

Preferred Future of the Project

Participating in this project is intended to be a life-changing experience for the selected leaders. The goal is for each participant not only to identify and develop his or her God-given calling, giftedness, and strengths but also to lead from that calling and those gifts and strengths – and to do so for the remainder of their lives. Further, the long-term goal is to see this process replicated in the life of the church as similar groups are formed after the pilot project is over. The preferred future is for HBC to be filled with Christ followers who lead from their God-given calling, giftedness, and strengths as they minister in the church, the community, and the world.

Theological Foundations of the Project

The ministry of Highland Baptist Church is firmly grounded on biblical principles. God’s Word informs how the church functions on a daily basis. Having a solid theological foundation for this project, therefore, is non-negotiable. In the pilot project, the biblical base for this new ministry initiative will be clearly laid out and will center around the call, giftedness, and strengths that God gives each believer, as set forth in Scripture. Learnings from the theological investigation (documented in Chapter 3 of this paper) that are applicable to both the community culture and the HBC culture (documented in Chapter 1 of this paper) will be highlighted. Among these are the following:

First, it is God who calls, gifts, and gives strengths. He is the initiator in the calling process, the one who invites a person to salvation and then to minister in Christ's name to accomplish his mission in the world. It is he who sustains in difficult times. This call to ministry comes to both clergy and laypersons and serves as a navigation system for each person's life. God is also the provider of gifts and strengths, the one who blesses Christ followers with "manifestations of grace"⁶ and talents to fulfill their callings.

Second, it is through the church that God works. As the *ekklesia* – "the called out ones" – members of a local church are commissioned by God himself to impact their community and the world for Christ (Matthew 28:18-20).⁷ Thus, as the selected HBC leaders practice leading from their calling, gifts, and strengths, they will be modeling what it means to be the church in a changing world and a changing community. They will be modeling ways to be a God-led church member in a culture that does not value church involvement as highly as it did in previous years (See Chapter 1.). They will be modeling ways to effect change in a church that is often stuck in past organizational structures and ministry models. They also will be modeling how to employ their God-given gifts for the common good of the church (1 Corinthians 12:7).

Third, as God calls, gifts, and equips Christ followers, he empowers them to do the work of ministry. In the pilot project, the selected leaders will identify their God-given calling, giftedness, and strengths and then will be unleashed to lead. They will be freed up to be the persons God created them to be and to function as God intended for

⁶ Ken Hemphill, *Serving God: Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts Workbook* (Dallas, TX: The Sampson Company, 1995), 22.

⁷ Herschel H. Hobbs, *The Baptist Faith and Message* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1971), 64.

them to function. As they practice leading from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths, they will develop confidence and skills, thus setting an example for the entire church.

Fourth, as the selected leaders do the work of ministry, HBC members will notice their contributions and affirm their efforts. This will encourage them to continue to lead from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths in the church's ministry. As these leaders serve in the community and larger world, those to whom they minister and those whom they serve alongside will likewise acknowledge their contributions, helping them understand that they are valued servant leaders who are making a difference for Christ in and through the church's ministry.

Goals for Selected Highland Baptist Church Leaders

The thesis of this new ministry initiative is that selected HBC leaders will learn how to lead from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths in the church's ministry through participating in a pilot project that will focus on identifying, developing, and then practicing leading from their calling, gifts, and strengths. The five stated strategy goals emerge from this thesis. The goals are cognitive, affective, and behavioral in nature.

The first two goals are cognitive: to understand the concept of how to lead from one's calling, giftedness, and strengths; and, to identify one's calling, giftedness, and strengths. The next two goals are behavioral: to develop the ability to lead from one's calling, giftedness, and strengths; and, to practice leading from one's calling, giftedness, and strengths. The fifth goal is affective: to affirm the value to the church's ministry of leading from one's calling, giftedness, and strengths.

While the pilot project is targeted to a specific group of five leaders, the preferred future is to see this pilot project process replicated in the congregation, thus “developing a culture that values and cultivates the strengths of everyone who is part of it,” as advocated by Reggie McNeal.⁸ Long-term, such a culture at Highland Baptist will generate unity of purpose among members as they seek to fulfill the church’s mission of engaging the community for Christ.

Strategy Content and Methodology

The strategy content grows out of the project goals. As stated above, two goals are cognitive, thus the strategy content will be a study of how to identify one’s calling, gifts, and strengths; and a study of how to lead from one’s calling, gifts, and strengths. Two goals are behavioral, thus the strategy content will focus on developing the ability to lead from and then put into practice leading from one’s calling, gifts, and strengths. The final goal is affective, thus the strategy content will focus on how leaders who lead from their calling, gifts, and strengths add value to a church’s ministry. The primary methodologies to be used are a pilot project, a small group, selected resources, and an assessment.

First, a pilot project will be conducted. This methodology will provide the opportunity to hone the new ministry initiative before it is implemented church-wide. In essence, the pilot project will serve as a laboratory to test the thesis and to refine the process. This author will lead the pilot project. After the fifteen-week pilot project is completed, adjustments, if needed, will be made before the process is replicated.

⁸ Reggie McNeal, *Practicing Greatness: 7 Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 73.

Second, a small group will be the focal methodology in the pilot project. Meeting the goals set forth above will be the guiding principles of the small group. Specific plans for the small-group meetings will grow out of the strategy content noted above. This author will lead the small-group meetings.

Employing small-group methodology will provide an active learning environment in which ongoing interaction between the five selected leaders and the author of the project will be possible. The group atmosphere will be informal and will encourage dialogue as concepts, methodologies, and resources are presented and modeled by this author. This format will facilitate achieving the project's two cognitive goals and will serve as a catalyst for reaching the behavioral and affective goals.

As this author guides the small-group process, he will capitalize on the inherent small-group relational dynamics between the leader and the members and will give individual attention to each member. Thus, he will be able to customize the cognitive, behavioral, and affective goals to each participant, recognizing and affirming each person's individual calling, gifting, and strengths. This will also allow for more in-depth teaching and training.

A small group will also provide a safe place for participants to share experiences and exchange ideas. As Bill Hull writes, small-group intimacy "creates a safety that permits people to lower their defenses and be authentic."⁹ In this environment of authenticity, deep conversations can occur and real-life solutions that can be applied to current ministry opportunities can be discovered.

⁹ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 235.

An additional benefit of using the small-group methodology is that by beginning with a select few leaders, this author can set the stage for what he envisions as HBC's preferred future. As Hull notes, a leader can "lead [a] group in the way [he] want[s] them to lead others."¹⁰ As the late Stephen R. Covey advises, a leader should "[begin] with the end in mind."¹¹ Therefore in the pilot project, this author will cast the vision that as these leaders learn to lead from God-given callings, giftedness, and strengths, they will be modeling what is intended to become part of the permanent HBC culture. Thus, what happens in the initial small group will be critical to the future success of the church's ministry.

Third, relevant resources will be used in the small-group meetings. Selected passages from three books, a Bible study, and two tools to assess the progress of group members in meeting the project goals will be the primary resources. These resources focus on the leaders' God-given calling, gifts, and strengths.

Fourth, in order to meet the project goals, this author will assess the leaders' progress throughout the fifteen weeks of the pilot project. To determine if their understanding of the concept of leading from their call, gifts, and strengths is on target (goal one), in a small-group meeting he will ask each participant to share his or her thoughts on what it means to lead in this fashion. If any participant seems to lack understanding, he will schedule a one-on-one discussion with him or her. To determine if

¹⁰ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*, 229.

¹¹ Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 102.

the leaders have identified their gifts and strengths, this author will ensure that each has completed the appropriate inventories (goal two).

To assess the leaders' progress toward developing the ability to lead from their God-given call, gifts, and strengths, this author will observe them as they practice leading from their gifts and strengths in a church ministry (goals three and four). He will also ask selected persons impacted by the leaders' ministries to complete a one-page observation form¹² at the end of the leaders' time of service. He will then prepare a summary of those observations to discuss one-on-one with the leaders. This will address the behavioral goal.

To assess how the leaders perceive the value of leading from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths in the church's ministry (goal five), each will complete a one-page reflection paper using a guided question provided by this author.¹³ This author will lead a discussion of their reflection papers in a small-group meeting. Then they will be asked to either give a testimony in worship or write a church newsletter article about their ministry experience in leading from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths. In that small-group meeting, plans will also be made about next steps in forming more small groups and replicating the process church-wide. Also, the leaders will be asked to attend two post-project meetings in which they will complete an evaluation questionnaire about the pilot project and will participate in a guided discussion about adjustments that will be needed to that process and to make suggestions for the replication process.

¹² See Appendix 2, "Observation Form."

¹³ See Appendix 3, "Self Reflection Guide."

Target Population

The target population of the pilot project itself is five HBC leaders who will be selected according to the criteria presented below. The task of these leaders will be to move through a process of identifying, developing, and then practicing leading from their God-given calling, gifting, and strengths in a HBC ministry. At the end of the fifteen-month pilot project, these leaders will be charged with forming and leading small groups that will navigate the same course, thus increasing the target population to twenty-five people. Over time, this replication concept will continue and eventually involve as many HBC church members as are willing to participate.

Criteria for selecting the initial five leaders will be spiritual condition, age or life stage, gender, passion or call, gifting, strengths, and the ability to learn and lead. First and foremost, each participant must be firm in his or her commitment to Christ, exhibit Christ-like character traits, and actively practicing spiritual disciplines. Different life stages will be represented in the group and both men and women will be included. Various ministry interests, passions, gifts, and strengths will be represented. In particular, to help the church move to an external focus and to address the changing ethnicity of the community, these leaders will need the gifts of encouragement, leadership, and service. Finally, all five leaders will need the ability to learn and lead. Thus, they will need to enter the process with a humble posture, ready to learn. Plus, they will need to have the disposition to lead a subsequent group.

Summary

This chapter described the genesis, overview, and preferred future of this project, which is designed to help selected leaders learn how to lead from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths in the ministry of Highland Baptist Church. The four theological implications – which center on God’s call, gifting, and equipping – were identified, and the cognitive, behavioral, and affective goals were listed. In order to achieve these goals, four methodologies emerged: pilot project, small group, use of selected resources, and assessment tools. Finally, the target population was named and criteria for the selected leaders were given.

In Chapter 5, an overview of the implementation and evaluation phases of the fifteen-month pilot project will be laid out. The implementation phase will test whether the process outlined for helping the five selected leaders practice leading from their calling, gifts, and strength will work as a model to be replicated in the church long-term. The evaluation phase will involve completing two post-project assessment tools – namely, a questionnaire and a guided discussion – to determine the effectiveness of this leader development process and consider needed changes to ensure success as the process is replicated in the church.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND EVALUATION PLAN

A fifteen-month pilot project will be the central element in the implementation phase of the new ministry initiative that is the focus of this doctoral project. In the pilot project, five selected Highland Baptist Church leaders will learn how to lead and then practice leading from their God-given calling, giftedness, and strengths in the church's ministry. In the pilot project, the process of helping the selected leaders discover and activate their calling, gifts, and strengths will be tested. Both the process and the results will be evaluated before the process is replicated church-wide. A small-group approach will be the major methodology used in the pilot project and will foster a dynamic learning environment that will enable the leaders to be equipped and encouraged to put their calling, gifts, and strengths to work in the church.

This author will lead the pilot project. He will guide, coach, and debrief the five leaders throughout the process. The evaluation plan will incorporate two assessment tools: a questionnaire for the selected leaders to evaluate the leader development process and a discussion guide for this author to use in the post-project presentation to the selected leaders to assess the personal impact of the process on their leadership abilities

and to recommend improvements to make the process more effective and ready to utilize on a larger scale.

Pilot Project Timeline

The fifteen-month pilot project will be launched in June 2016. The timeline for the completion of the pilot project is as follows: in June 2016, the five selected leaders will be identified and invited to participate in the pilot project; in July 2016, these leaders will obtain and review selected resources in preparation for the project; in August 2016, the leaders will attend a retreat that will focus on understanding how to practice leading from one's God-given calling, giftedness, and strengths; in September and October 2016, the leaders will complete the gifts and strengths inventories and then debrief the results; in winter 2016-2017, the leaders will be coached one-on-one by this author to discover ways they can put their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths to work in the church; during March through July 2017, the leaders will activate their calling, gifts, and strengths in the church's ministry; in August 2017, the leaders will be evaluated and affirmed for how they practiced leading from their calling, gifts, and strengths; in September 2017, a post-project evaluation will be performed by this author.

Identifying Leaders

During June and July 2016, the five selected leaders will be identified and invited to be a part of the pilot project. In a meeting led by this author, a four-person team consisting of the HBC chair of deacons, two HBC ministry staff members, and this author will select the leaders. This author will cast the vision for the project and describe the

type of leader who will best fit the vision, and then the team will develop a list of five leaders to be invited to be a part of the process. They will also identify an additional five people should any or all of the initially selected leaders decline the invitation. The criteria for selecting the five leaders will be spiritual condition, age or life stage, length of time as HBC members, gender, passion or call, gifting, strengths, and the ability to learn and lead. Based on these criteria, the makeup of the group will be diverse. There must be consensus among selection team members as to who will be a part of the pilot project.

The list of the first five potential participants will then be divided among the selection team members for notification. Team members will begin by speaking in person or by phone to potential participants, describing the components of the pilot project and offering to send them a detailed description via email. This description, which will be written by this author, will include the time frame for the project, a list of resources, and expectations of each participant.

In the initial conversation, team members will talk with participants about why they were selected and how they would fit in the group of selected leaders for the pilot project. Expectations will be laid out and discussed. These expectations will include a fifteen-month commitment to the process; the purchase of required resources at a cost of approximately fifty dollars; and the willingness to complete the training, serve in a ministry area for three to five months, participate in the debriefing and evaluation meetings, and prayerfully consider joining the replication process in the future. The potential participants will be informed that the intent of this pilot project is not solely for the purpose of fulfilling this author's doctor of ministry degree requirement. The preferred future is that this process will be repeated again and again, becoming a part of

the fabric of the church's ministry, so that HBC is filled with Christ followers who lead from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths. A follow-up face-to-face meeting or phone call with the team member will be scheduled to learn the candidate's response to the invitation.

Once five leaders have accepted the invitation, they will be responsible for purchasing three books: *Stuck! Navigating the Transitions of Life and Leadership*¹ by Terry B. Walling; *Jesus on Leadership: Becoming a Servant Leadership*² by C. Gene Wilkes; and *Now, Discover Your Strengths*³ by Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton. These resources will be used to help them discover their calling (Walling), gifts (Wilkes), and strengths (Buckingham and Clifton). These books, along with written instructions prepared by this author about the required readings, will be available from the HBC administrative assistant at the church office. To prepare for participating in the pilot project, before the first meeting the leaders will be required to read the sections in Walling's book pertaining to the clarity of one's call, chapter eleven in particular. They also will be required to read the week two materials in Wilkes' book, which covers spiritual gifts, and to read Buckingham and Clifton's entire book on strengths discovery.

¹ Terry B. Walling, *Stuck! Navigating the Transitions of Life and Leadership* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 2008).

² C. Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership: Becoming a Servant Leader* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Press, 1996).

³ Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, *Now, Discover Your Strengths* (New York: The Free Press, 2001).

Training Leaders

In August 2016, the initial training will take place in a one-day, nine-to-five Saturday retreat and will include two morning sessions, a lunch break, and two afternoon sessions. In the first session, after introductions, this author will share the genesis of the project. He will then give an overview of the project followed by the preferred future of the project. A time of extended prayer will close the first session.

The second session will center on a leader's God-given calling. This author will give a mini-lecture on Walling's four steps for bringing clarity to call and will guide the subsequent discussion. Next, examples of how a person may be called, found in Robert K. Hudnut's book *Call Waiting: How to Hear God Speak*,⁴ will be presented by this author. Finally, each of the five leaders will identify the example that best fits him or her and explain why it fits. Three or four clergy and HBC lay leaders selected and invited by this author will join the retreat toward the end of the second session to share how God called them and how that call has impacted their life and leadership. The five leaders will be encouraged to ask questions and discuss their calls with the guests who also will join them for lunch before departing.

The third session will focus on God-given spiritual gifts. Wilkes' material will serve as the basis for a mini-lecture and discussion on the biblical teaching on servant leadership, the purpose of spiritual gifts, and a representative list of spiritual gifts from the New Testament. Wilkes' book will also be consulted as to how God sets Christ followers apart for service in the church, community, and world.

⁴ Robert K. Hudnut, *Call Waiting: How to Hear God Speak* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999).

The fourth session will focus on God-given strengths. With *Now, Discover Your Strengths* as the primary source, this author will give a mini-lecture on the strengths revolution and the value of Christ followers discovering and activating their strengths. A brief overview of the thirty-four themes of the *StrengthsFinder Profile* will be included. The retreat will conclude with debriefing as the leaders and this author identify key findings from the mini-lectures and discussions on leading from one's God-given calling, gifts, and strengths.

In September 2016, the leaders will meet with this author to complete and score the spiritual inventory found in week two of *Jesus on Leadership*.⁵ Then, this author will give instructions on how to take the online *StrengthsFinder Profile*.⁶ In October 2016, the group will reconvene to debrief the findings from the spiritual gifts survey and the online profile.

During winter 2016-2017, this author will meet with each leader to provide one-on-one coaching. At that time, he will do a deeper analysis of each leader's findings and talk with each about how to activate his or her calling, gifts, and strengths in the ministry of Highland Baptist Church. Together they will devise specific ways to put each leader's calling, gifts, and strengths to work in the church. Each leader will be asked to make the following days and weeks a season of prayer.

During this coaching period, this author will make the church fully aware of the pilot project and its intended purpose of helping the selected leaders practice leading

⁵ C. Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership: Becoming a Servant Leader* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Press, 1996), 44-48.

⁶ "StrengthsFinder," Gallup, Incorporated, accessed January 16, 2016, www.strengthsfinder.com.

from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths in a ministry setting. He will also explain the expectation that the process will be replicated to include all willing church members and not only a select few. Through multiple pulpit announcements, a church newsletter article, and personal conversations with ministry leaders, he will encourage HBC members to accept the participants as they practice what they have learned in existing ministries. This will ensure that the selected leaders will move into a safe environment in which to test their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths. He also will encourage HBC members to prayerfully consider becoming a part of the replication process once the pilot project is completed.

From March to July 2017, the leaders will activate their calling, gifts, and strengths in a selected ministry area of the church. To accomplish this, each will contact the leader of his or her chosen ministry area to discuss available opportunities. These leaders will then provide training for the pilot project participants and mobilize them to serve according to their calling, gifts, and strengths.

During early August 2017, this author will evaluate and affirm each of the five selected leaders, who by that time will have practiced leading from their calling, gifts, and strengths. A one-page observation form will be used as the evaluation tool⁷ and will be completed by this author and the selected leaders as well as students and participants from each leader's chosen ministry area. Those who will be asked to complete the observation form will be selected by the team that originally chose the five leaders for the pilot project. Then, this author will discuss the results with each of the five selected

⁷ See Appendix 2, "Observation Form."

leaders in one-on-one meetings. Each of the five leaders will also complete a one-page self-reflection guide.⁸

In late August 2017, the five leaders will meet as a group with this author to discuss the results of the self-reflection assessment. In the meeting, this author will also ask the leaders to share with the church their experiences of practicing leading from their God-given calling, gifting, and strengths by either giving a testimony in a Sunday morning HBC worship service or writing a church newsletter article. Opportunity for the leaders to affirm each other will be given. The author will close their time together by reminding the leaders of the preferred future of the project and will challenge them to be a part of the replication process at HBC as it unfolds.

Resources

Written materials that will be used in the pilot project will include *The Holy Bible, New International Version*⁹; Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, *Now, Discover Your Strengths*; Robert K. Hudnut, *Call Waiting: How to Hear God Speak*; Terry B. Walling, *Stuck! Navigating the Transitions of Life and Leadership*; and C. Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership: Becoming a Servant Leader*.

In terms of facilities, the initial training retreat will be held at Kavanaugh Enrichment Center in Crestwood, Kentucky, thirty minutes from Highland Baptist Church. All other small-group gatherings will be held in the HBC conference room. One-on-one coaching sessions will take place in the author's office, a restaurant, a coffee

⁸ See Appendix 3, "Self Reflection Guide."

⁹ *The NIV Study Bible*, ed. Kenneth L. Barker (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011).

shop, or in the home of a participant. The five selected leaders will primarily practice leading from their calling, gifts, and strengths in the in-house ministries of HBC, though some ministry opportunities may be in an off-campus setting.

The selected leaders will be asked to purchase their own written materials to ease the financial burden on the church since the preferred future of the pilot project will involve the entire congregation. If the church purchased these materials for the five selected leaders, it would set a precedent that would not be financially feasible when the project is replicated. HBC will budget for the retreat center rental, lunch and snacks for the retreat and meetings, and office supplies for the retreat and meetings.

Equipment needed for the retreat and meetings will be minimal. A dry erase board, easel, markers, and a large Post-it pad will suffice. HBC will provide these items.

Other than the three to four clergy and lay leaders who will be invited by this author to the retreat to share about their call, the only additional support personnel needed will be the church administrative assistant. She will be tasked with ordering the books for the five leaders and handling payments received. She will also be tasked with obtaining the supplies and gathering the equipment needed for the retreat and other meetings. In addition, she will be tasked with reserving the Kavanaugh Enrichment Center for the retreat.

Evaluation Plan

While the time constraints of the doctoral project will not allow for field-testing, this author will use the evaluation plan given below to assess the results after the project's end in August 2017. The evaluation will incorporate two assessment tools

created by this author. The first tool will be a questionnaire for the selected leaders to use to evaluate the leader development process,¹⁰ and the second will be a discussion guide for this author to use in the post-project presentation to the selected leaders.¹¹

In early September 2017 the questionnaire will be distributed to the five selected leaders at a small-group meeting. This tool is a “post-then assessment”¹² designed to rate the leaders’ progress toward their ministry goals. This author selected this assessment tool which asks for two ratings on each goal at one point in time because it has proven to be more reliable than assessments that take the two ratings at different points in time (such as pre-post tests).¹³ Researchers have found that “the changes that people go through changes how they perceive their own knowledge, skills and capacities”¹⁴ which gives them the ability to more reliably rate themselves looking back at the time they began the training and afterward. The results of the post-then assessment will help this author determine if the pilot project process goals were met and had the intended results. The leaders will have one week to complete the questionnaire before returning it to this author, who will then have one week to tabulate the results.

In a late September 2017 meeting with the leaders, this author will report the results of the post-then assessment and will make a post-project power-point presentation

¹⁰ See Appendix 4, “Evaluation of the Leader Development Process”

¹¹ See Appendix 5, “Post-Project Discussion Guide.”

¹² “Evaluating Outcomes and Impacts: A Scan of 55 Leadership Development Programs,” Development Guild/DDI, Inc., W.K. Kellogg Foundation, p. 20, accessed January 16, 2016, www.leadershiplearning.org.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

that will include a summary of the questionnaire results. He will then lead a post-project discussion focusing on the positive impact the process had on the leaders, changes that need to be made in the process, and suggestions for implementing the process church-wide. The leaders' input will offer valuable feedback as HBC prepares to replicate the process.

Summary

In Chapter 5, an overview of the implementation and evaluation phases of the pilot project has been given. The timeline and details for identifying and training the five selected leaders who will participate in the project has been provided. The resources – including written materials, facilities, budget, equipment, and support personnel – have been listed. Finally, an evaluation plan based on project goals and complete with assessment tools has been presented.

To conclude this written project, the final entry will be a summary of the entire paper and conclusions drawn from the work. This will include a restatement of the thesis and a summary of the primary points made in the body of this paper. The conclusion will offer closing thoughts, suggest applications for other ministries, and propose further potential research based on the project's findings.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the introduction to this doctoral project, the thesis of the new ministry initiative at Highland Baptist Church in Shelbyville, Shelby County, Kentucky, was laid out: Selected leaders at Highland Baptist Church will learn how to lead from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths in the church's ministry through participating in a pilot project that will focus on identifying, developing, and then practicing leading from that calling and those gifts and strengths. In essence, this thesis became the overarching goal of the project and served as a guide throughout the process, including the design of the ministry strategy. While the short-term goal of the project was focused on developing the selected leaders in the pilot project, the long-term goal will be to replicate the field-tested process for years to come so that Highland Baptist will be filled with leaders who lead from their calling, gifts, and strengths to the glory of God.

Summary

A study of the ministry context, including both the history and current culture of the community and the church, and an examination of the biblical and theological concepts associated with a leader laid the foundation for designing the ministry strategy. Attention was given to the fact that both the church and the community in which it is located are in the midst of change. Over the past two decades, the population of Shelby

County has grown significantly as the shift from primarily rural to becoming a bedroom community of neighboring Louisville and Frankfort has accelerated. Additionally, Hispanics have become the second largest ethnic group in the county, surpassing the historically second Black population. Highland Baptist itself is in the throes of change as the church faces decisions about how to minister in the midst of this changing demography.

Because Highland Baptist places great emphasis on a strong biblical foundation for all it does, books chosen for review in this project undergirded the theological basis for leaders who lead from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths. The New Testament Barnabas was lifted up as a model for leaders. Focus was given to key spiritual disciplines leaders must practice if they are to be effective.

With the community and church contexts and the theological foundation in place, the ministry strategy was then laid out. It included cognitive, affective, and behavioral goals; educational methodology; an implementation process; and an evaluation plan. Specifically, plans for a fifteen-month pilot project, with a small-group approach as the main component, in which five selected leaders would participate were presented. The project thesis would be the guiding principal of the strategy. Research included in this doctoral project paper concerning the ministry context, the theological foundations, and literature focused on developing effective leaders will be incorporated in all aspects of the pilot project when it is field-tested.

Because the pilot project has not yet been field-tested, no report on outcomes can be given. Further, as the pilot project unfolds, gaps in the process may reveal the need for further research and development. This author, however, expects that by the end of the

pilot project the five selected leaders will have gained an understanding of how God has called them to lead and serve in the church's ministry. He also expects that they will have discovered their gifts and strengths, tested those gifts and strengths in a short-term ministry assignment, and then put them to work long-term in the ministry setting to which God has called them. It is expected that this activation of their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths will prove beneficial to their development as leaders and will enhance the church's ministry. It is further expected that the selected leaders will in turn participate in and champion the replication of this pilot project that this author is planning for the church. As this author enthusiastically and strategically casts the vision for this new ministry initiative to the entire church and with the pilot project successfully completed, it is expected that most Highland Baptist Church members will embrace the long-range initiative and become engaged in the replication process. This initiative and subsequent replication process will, in the end, become a key component in establishing a culture at HBC aimed at addressing the cultural changes in the community and thus effectively engaging the community for Christ.

Conclusions

Several conclusions have grown out of the research and the writing of this doctoral project paper. Additionally, several steps have been taken to address some of these conclusions. Further, some thought has been given to how learnings from this project may apply in other ministry contexts.

First, HBC must remain firmly planted on the truths of the Bible. The Bible must continue to be the guidebook for preaching, teaching, and organizational and ministry

practices inside and outside the walls of the church building. The theological and biblical study involved in this project reaffirmed this author's commitment to the church's mandate to engage its community for God's glory. It also reaffirmed his understanding that God calls both clergy and laypeople to be ministers. Guided by scripture, HBC as the *ekklesia* – the called out ones – must be gospel carriers, proclaiming the message of the cross of Jesus Christ in the community. They must be on the move with the gospel, delivering the salvation narrative to the residents of Shelbyville and the surrounding communities.

Second, the fact that only 12 percent of Shelby County residents attend a worship service on any given Sunday must be a driving force in Highland Baptist finding ways to make inroads into the rhythms of the community and then to engage residents for Christ. For Highland Baptist, the attractional church model must not be abandoned but a missional mindset must be employed as well. As one first step, in early 2016 HBC parents and church staff members have begun discussions about leading pre-game Bible studies in spring-summer-fall Sunday community baseball leagues for boys.

Third, the changing ethnic makeup of the community must be addressed. Now that 9 percent of the county's population is Hispanic, HBC cannot ignore the evangelistic, discipleship, and compassion opportunities that exist among Hispanics. To that end, in 2016, HBC will investigate the possibility of hosting a Hispanic congregation on the church campus.

Fourth, the disparity between the median age of church members and county residents must be addressed. As a first step, in 2016, the church restructured its staff to strengthen youth and children's ministry. At the same time, a lay volunteer was enlisted

to serve as senior adult ministry coordinator to serve the significant number of older adults in the church.

Fifth, influenced by the research done in this project, this author led HBC to adopt a new mission statement that encourages members and attenders to engage their community for Christ, thus moving from a primarily internal focus to being more externally focused. As a result, in 2015, the church not only partnered with several area ministries but also affirmed members who went on domestic and international mission trips. Such ministries will be expanded in 2016.

Sixth, central to the success of this doctoral project was this author's growing understanding of the role of a leader in Southern Baptist ecclesiology. It is God who calls both clergy and laypersons and who insists that the call be front and center in their lives. Further, it is God who also equips them with the gifts and strengths to fulfill that calling.

Seventh, it is critical that any ministry strategy be designed to fit a specific church and community culture. For this author, the temptation was to simply transport to HBC strategies and programs that he had employed successfully in previous churches. This approach, however, would have failed because of the changing Shelby County culture and the current HBC dynamics.

Eighth, research for this project underscored the fact that HBC stands at the crossroads. The church can choose to continue to do church as it has in the past or it can change its methodology and address the changing community culture. As illustrated in the examples given in the summary paragraphs above, the church is beginning to make the necessary internal changes and is poised to take advantage of the available opportunities in the community to advance the gospel.

Finally, five major findings would be applicable to other evangelical churches. First, churches that stand firm on the Bible will find scriptural support for developing leaders who lead from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths. Second, the process for researching the community and church contexts can be easily adapted to any church. Third, the theological and biblical studies can be used by churches with a similar theological creed as HBC. Fourth, the literature review can provide needed background material for any church desiring to understand how to flesh out the thesis of this project. Fifth, the pilot project process would be easily adaptable.

APPENDIX 1

**HIGHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH
SHELBYVILLE, KENTUCKY**

AUGUST 2015 SURVEY

***Please complete one survey per family.**

(Note: Not all questions will apply to every family member.)

1. How many persons are in your family? _____
2. What are the ages of the persons in your family? _____
3. How many years have you lived in Shelby County? _____
4. If you are not a resident of Shelby County, where do you live? _____
5. Are you (or other family members) employed? If so, where?
6. How many persons in your family are retired? _____
7. How many miles do you drive to HBC (be as exact as you can)? _____
8. How many years have you attended HBC? _____
9. How many persons in your family are members of HBC? _____
10. What year(s) did those family members join HBC? _____
11. What is your family's level of involvement at HBC: (circle one)

Very Involved Somewhat Involved Attend Sunday Morning only
12. What is your definition of being "involved" in a church?
13. Name (optional) _____

APPENDIX 2

OBSERVATION FORM

You are being asked to fill out this form for _____ as part of a leadership training project. Please answer the questions below based on your observations of her/him in the _____ ministry area.

1. What has the person stated as God's call on his/her life?

2. Does it appear that he/she is living out his/her call based on your observations?

3. What are his/her gifts and strengths based on the completed inventories?

4. How was he/she successful using his/her gifts and strengths in the ministry setting?

5. What challenges did he/she have while serving in that setting?

6. Suggest some strategies for continued success: how can this person be successful going forward?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this observation form. Your feedback is an important part of the learning process for participants in the leadership training project.

APPENDIX 3

Self Reflection Guide

Responding to the feedback on the observation form, in what way did your leadership add value to the church's ministry?

APPENDIX 4

Evaluation of the Leader Development Process Participant Survey

Thank you for being a part of this leadership training project. To help evaluate the process, please complete this survey and rate yourself in each of the areas. I will use the results to put together a summary presentation at our final group meeting. Individual responses, however, will not be shared, so be as honest as you can. Please return the survey to me by (Date).

1. Circle the number that best describes how well you understand what it means to lead from your God-given calling, gifts, and strengths now that you have completed this process.
(1) Not at all (2) Fairly well (3) Very well
2. Circle the number that best describes how well you understood what it meant to “lead from your God-given calling, gifts, and strengths” at the beginning of this process.
(1) Not at all (2) Fairly well (3) Very well
3. Circle the number that best describes how well you are able to identify your God-given calling, gifts, and strengths now that you have completed this process.
(1) Not at all (2) Fairly well (3) Very well
4. Circle the number that best describes how well you were able to identify your God-given calling, gifts, and strengths at the beginning of this process.
(1) Not at all (2) Fairly well (3) Very well
5. Circle the number that best describes how well you are able to develop the ability to lead from your God-given calling, gifts, and strengths now that you have completed this process.
(1) Not at all (2) Fairly well (3) Very well
6. Circle the number that best describes how well you were able to develop the ability to lead from your God-given calling, gifts, and strengths at the beginning of this process.
(1) Not at all (2) Fairly well (3) Very well

7. Circle the number that best describes how well you are able to lead from your God-given calling, gifts, and strengths now that you have completed this process.

(1) Not at all (2) Fairly well (3) Very well

8. Circle the number that best describes how well you were able to lead from your God-given calling, gifts, and strengths at the beginning of this process.

(1) Not at all (2) Fairly well (3) Very well

9. Circle the number that best describes how well you are able to affirm the value to the church's ministry of leading from your God-given calling, gifts, and strengths now that you have completed this process.

(1) Not at all (2) Fairly well (3) Very well

10. Circle the number that best describes how well you were able to affirm the value to the church's ministry of leading from your God-given calling, gifts, and strengths at the beginning of the process.

(1) Not at all (2) Fairly well (3) Very well

11. Overall, what has been the most meaningful /useful part of participating in this leadership training process?

Thank you for completing the survey!

Chris

APPENDIX 5

Post-Project Discussion Guide

1. Describe the positive impact this process has had on you as a leader at Highland Baptist Church. What have you learned about God's calling, gifting, and strengthening? How has this process helped you understand and solidify God's call on your life and affirm his gifting and strengthening to fulfill that calling?
2. How did practicing leading from your calling, giftedness, and strengths help you understand and affirm the value to the HBC ministry of church leaders ministering out of their callings, giftedness, and strengths?
3. Identify changes that need to be made in the process to make it more effective in helping HBC leaders learn to lead from their God-given calling, gifts, and strengths.
4. What suggestions do you have for implementing the process on a larger scale at Highland Baptist Church?

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